LENIN'S ELECTORAL STRATEGY FROM 1907 TO THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION OF 1917

The Ballot, the Streets—or Both

AUGUST H. NIMTZ

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Preface

This volume completes the narrative that began in *Lenin's Electoral Strategy from Marx and Engels through the Revolution of 1905: The Ballot, the Streets—or Both* (hereafter, *LES1905*)—a narrative informed by four arguments:[1] The first is that no one did more to utilize the electoral and parliamentary arenas for revolutionary ends than Vladimir Ilych Ulyanov—Lenin. The second argument is that Lenin's position on the "streets" versus the "ballot box"—no, it wasn't either/or—was squarely rooted in the politics of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Third, the historic split in international Marxism between communism and social democracy was long in place before the Guns of August 1914 exploded, owing in large part to two very different conceptions of how Marxists should comport themselves in the electoral/parliamentary arenas—with Lenin on one side and what would become twentieth-century social democracy on the other side. The last claim is that the head-start program the founders of the modern communist movement gave Lenin on electoral politics goes a long way toward explaining why the Bolsheviks, rather than any other political current, were hegemonic in October 1917.

When Russia's toilers took to the streets at the beginning of 1905 to challenge the three-hundred-year-old rule of the Romanov dynasty, Lenin was soon given the opportunity to apply lessons distilled by Marx and Engels on the revolutionary usage of the electoral process. Forced to make concessions to the masses in motion, Czar Nicholas II, Europe's last absolute monarch, did what his predecessors had never done—institute tentative steps toward representative democracy. But Russia's first parliamentary experiment was born with handcuffs that limited its powers. While the liberal Constitutional Democratic Party, or Cadets, was willing to take part in the democratically hobbled national parliament, Lenin's party, the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP), was ambivalent. The divide that surfaced soon after its birth in 1903 between the Bolshevik wing—to which Lenin belonged—and the Menshevik wing—to which Georgi Plekhanov, the titular founder of Russian social democracy and Lenin's one-time mentor, belonged—manifested itself on this question. The latter agreed to participate in the elections to the Duma but not to take their seats if elected. The Bolsheviks, in contrast, called for a complete boycott, a stance that Lenin

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reluctantly agreed to. But when the Duma convened in April 1906, he immediately embraced the 18 Menshevik deputies who were elected in order to influence their conduct as a party group or fraction in what would be Russia's First State Duma.

Russia's first experiment in representative governance lasted only three months. Granted under duress, Nicholas felt less pressure to keep the Duma in place as the revolutionary mobilizations unleashed in 1905 began to subside in the spring of 1906. Though always willing to accommodate themselves to Nicholas, the Cadets, the largest bloc of the almost five hundred deputies in the Duma, increasingly constituted a thorn in the side of the monarchy. The land question was the unbridgeable divide. Any attempts by the Cadets, however feeble, to ameliorate the deplorable position that the mass of peasants faced were seen by the landlord class, at whose head stood the Czar, as a mortal threat to their interests. Hence Nicholas's implacable resistance to any kinds of reforms—intransigence that the Cadets bent to.

Lenin did all he could to encourage the RSDLP's Duma fraction to expose the prevarications of the Cadets on the land question as well as other issues. The pronouncements of Peter Struve, a Cadet leader and one-time "Marxist," were special targets of his polemics. Lenin's intent, utilizing the rostrum of the Duma, was to convince the peasants, represented by the Trudovik deputies, that only the proletariat and not the liberals were their real allies. But if the Cadets were prone to bend to Nicholas et al., the Mensheviks were prone to bend to the Cadets. They concurred with Lenin and the Bolsheviks that a bourgeois and not a socialist revolution was on the immediate agenda in Russia, but they disagreed, profoundly, on which bourgeois layer to look to for that revolutionary project. Whereas Plekhanov and the Mensheviks were prone to look to the liberal bourgeoisie that the Cadets sought to represent, Lenin insisted that it was with the peasantry that Russia's proletariat should seek to forge an alliance for making the bourgeois democratic revolution. Toward that end he waged, much to the consternation of the Mensheviks, an incessant campaign to expose the democratic shortcomings of the Cadets. While the latter were willing to compromise with Nicholas on the land question, the Trudovik deputies were increasingly less inclined to do so—a difference that Lenin, through his efforts to influence the RSDLP deputies, did all he could to deepen. Nicholas aided and abetted this effort because he wasn't willing to grant the few crumbs that the Cadets had called for. He'd had enough of the democratic experiment. On July 8, 1906, the monarch sent the Duma packing but called for a new one to convene in February the following year.

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Unlike for the First Duma, Lenin decided that the Bolsheviks should not boycott the elections to the Second Duma and waged a campaign to get his wing of the RSDLP on board. Once they did, at least the majority, the task then was to conduct an election campaign that upheld the principle of independent working-class political action. That proved to be a challenge because of Menshevik/Cadet claims that a vote for the RSDLP would split the left/progressive vote and allow the most reactionary party, the "Black Hundreds," to be elected. Only a vote for the Cadets, the "lesser of the evils," as the Mensheviks argued, could prevent that outcome. Lenin crunched the numbers and spilled a lot of ink to dispute that claim. He also insisted on fidelity to the decision adopted at the RSDLP 1906 congress that only in the second round of elections could the party enter into electoral blocs, and then only with the Trudoviks and the peasant-oriented socialist party, the Socialist Revolutionaries. The election results, Lenin felt, vindicated his intransigence.

The Second Duma, as Lenin foresaw, was more to the left than the First—setting the stage for another confrontation between the crown and Russia's democratic opening. He immediately sought to provide leadership for the 65 RSDLP deputies. He constantly resisted the Menshevik wing of the party and the Duma fraction—most of whom were Mensheviks—that wanted to collaborate with the liberal Cadet party. His goal, largely fulfilled in the end, was to win the peasant Duma deputies away from the Cadets toward the Bolshevik perspective. The agrarian and budget questions figured significantly in Lenin's strategy, which involved hands-on assistance to the Bolshevik Duma deputies. His success was a factor in the dissolution of the Second Duma by the Czar and his prime minister, Pyotr Stolypin, on June 3, 1907, registering the end of the "Russian Spring." The accompanying arrest of the 55 RSDLP Duma deputies underscored that fact. Last, a by-product of the fight with the Mensheviks over electoral blocs and the comportment of the RSDLP's Duma fraction was the beginning of the codification of the norms of democratic centralism.

Chapter 1 of this volume, "'Legal and Illegal Work': The Third Duma," begins with Lenin's response to the regime's decree for convening a Third Duma, which lasted from 1907 to 1912. The ukase, which authorized even more undemocratic elections, provoked a major debate within the Bolsheviks that lasted for four years—to boycott or not to boycott the elections and the Duma. Another long-lasting debate had to do with how to make the Duma party group more accountable to the party. Lenin, who led the argument against boycotters, also had to debate those who effectively wanted to withdraw the Duma party group because of its

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initial missteps. To be convincing about the need for a Duma party group, he had to provide more hands-on leadership, including, for example, the writing of their speeches. Throughout these debates was the much-related issue of how to ensure that the party—functioning underground in a police state—made democratic decisions to which the Duma group would be held accountable. But that required a unified party, which the RSDLP certainly was not. Two mainly Bolshevik leadership meetings in Paris between 1908 and 1909 resulted in the 18-member party fraction being more politically effective. By the end of the Third Duma in June 1912, the RSDLP, with Lenin in the lead, had made major gains in the art of doing legal and illegal work simultaneously and thus challenging those party members, the liquidators, who called for an end to illegal work.

Elections to the Fourth Duma in 1912 took place in the context of a revival of the revolutionary movement, the theme with which Chapter 2, "'To Prepare for a New Russian Revolution': The Fourth Duma," commences. Despite the still-in-place undemocratic election procedures, the RSDLP won 13 seats, equally divided between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, to the new Duma; in the Third Duma the Mensheviks had been dominant in the fraction. This chapter describes the election campaign, particularly the gains the Bolsheviks made among the working class at the expense of the Mensheviks—foreshadowing Bolshevik success in 1917. The critical role of their newspaper *Pravda* in organizing the Duma party group and publicizing its activities is also detailed. Bolshevik success came despite, first, the actual and later formal split in the Duma party group between them and the Mensheviks; second, the fact, unbeknownst to them, that the head of their Duma party group was a police agent; and, last, the arrest of the their party group once Russia entered the First World War—due to their antiwar activities. In all this, Lenin's leadership was indispensable. During this period the already existent differences between his approach to doing electoral work and those of Western European social democracy became increasingly clear. The two quite different votes on funding the war in August 1914 by the Russian Duma deputies in contrast to social democrats in Western European parliaments dramatically registered this fact.

A new revolutionary situation opened with the overthrow of the monarchy in February 1917, which saw almost immediately the revival of the soviets. Chapter 3, "The 'Great War,' 1917, and Beyond," details Lenin's arguments and actions in defense of soviet governance as a democratic form of representative government—in the tradition of the Paris Commune—superior to that of the Duma and the Provisional Government leading up to the October Revolution and afterward. It reveals that

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he was flexible on the question prior to October and helped organize Bolshevik participation in elections to Dumas at the municipal level. The circumstantial evidence is that such involvement was crucial in explaining the Bolshevik-led triumph in 1917. I claim to have connected, for the first time, the dots between the revolutionary politics of Marx and Engels and the strategy and tactics that Lenin employed, through the utilization of the electoral and parliamentary arenas, for successfully leading the Bolshevik triumph both in October and afterward. While strongly defending soviet governance after October, Lenin argued against revolutionaries in other countries who dismissed participation in bourgeois democratic parliaments. His *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder* is given special attention, because he argued that Bolshevik experience in Duma work was "indispensable" for its success in October 1917. Finally, this chapter looks at what happened to Lenin's electoral strategy after his death with the Stalinist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and the consequences for the Communist or Third International.

In the Conclusion, I summarize the narrative in both volumes and then interrogate the four arguments around which it is woven to see if the evidence I present is convincing (in "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature," I continue the critique I began in *LES1905* of literature that disputes the evidence I employ to make my case). I then speculate on and offer an explanation for why this most outstanding and easily accessible dimension of Lenin's politics has received so little attention from either friends or foes.

Last, I return to the opening theme and rationale of the book—that is, its relevancy for current politics. Does Lenin have anything to offer present-day activists such as those in Tahrir Square? I employ a just-published book, *The Question of Strategy: Socialist Register 2013*, a series of essays about current political movements/developments around the world, to do just that. A recurrent theme in many of the essays is exactly the dilemma that Lenin addressed—to participate in and/or abstain from the electoral arena. I argue that virtually all the 24 authors and editors, a number of whom are on the front lines of struggle, would benefit from knowing about Lenin's Marxist electoral strategy.

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CHAPTER 1

"LEGAL AND ILLEGAL WORK"

THE THIRD DUMA

UNLIKE ITS TWO PREDECESSORS, THE THIRD DUMA completed its full term, from its convening in November 1907 to its scheduled dissolution in June 1912. It proved to be prerevolutionary Russia's longest uninterrupted experience with parliamentary government and thus Russian social democracy's as well. Also, unlike its predecessors, it was the product of the revolution's defeat. That fact more than any other determined its origins and its course. Lenin had to mount an even more vigorous campaign to convince his Bolshevik comrades to participate in a body that offered even fewer possibilities for revolutionary work. Contrary to the claims of a vocal minority, the choice wasn't either/or—either parliamentary or illegal work. Both, Lenin argued, not only could be done but indeed had to be done in order to make effective the work in each sphere of activity. What Lenin had to do to win the skeptics to his position is the subject of this chapter.

PREPARING FOR THE THIRD DUMA

Prime Minister Pyotr Stolypin's new electoral law, just as Lenin had forecasted, was crafted to render a Duma more to his liking or, as its chief architect put it, to "tear the State Duma from the hands of the revolutionaries, to assimilate it to the historical institutions, to bring it into the state system . . . To try, on the basis of a new law, to distil from Russia's chaos those elements in which there lived a feeling for the Russian state system, and from them to create the Duma as an organ for the reeducation of society."[1] Once most Bolsheviks were won to taking part in the rigged elections for the Third Duma, the next task was to achieve clarity about what was expected of revolutionary social democracy in a decidedly more reactionary legislative arena.

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AGAINST BOYCOTT

"In June 1907 they were the majority among the Bolsheviks. But *Proletary* campaigned continuously against the boycott."[2] That most Bolsheviks, especially those in Moscow, didn't want to take part in the Third Duma required that Lenin be at his persuasive best. His key weapon in the campaign was a 32-page pamphlet, *Against Boycott*. Central to his argument, presented in a very pedagogical and nonpolemical tone, was context and historical contingency. Simply put, the boycott was a tactic appropriate in some situations and not others. In the specific context of Russia's first revolution, the boycott of the regime's proposed Bulygin Duma was a necessity. As long as it was possible to "set up *representative institutions* of a purely revolutionary type—Soviets of Workers' Deputies, etc., in place of the representative institutions of the police-liberal type," everything, including the boycott of the latter, had to be employed to ensure the institution of the former.[3]

The more difficult task, Lenin recognized, was determining the rhythm of a revolution, its ascent and descent, and thus knowing what measures and slogans to employ in its different phases. Regarding the previous thirty months, once "the phase of upswing (1905)" had ended and "the phase of decline (1906–07)" had set in, the boycott, he argued, was no longer useful. One measure of the "upswing" was that "[r]epression expanded the movement instead of reducing it." An even more important indicator was "that the slogans of the revolutionaries not only evoked a response but actually *lagged* behind the march of events."[4] That was no longer the case, he pointed out. "Now we are at a period of a lull in the revolution when *a whole series of calls* systematically *met with no response among the masses*. That is what happened with the call to sweep away the Witte Duma (at the beginning of 1906), with the call for an uprising after the dissolution of the First Duma (in the summer of 1906), *with the call for struggle* in answer to the dissolution of the Second Duma and the coup d'état of June 3, 1907."[5] To call for a boycott—more specifically, an "active boycott"—in such a climate made no sense. While Lenin continued to defend the boycott of the Witte or First Duma, it's possible to read this—knowing that he reluctantly went along with it—as an implicit admission that it was inappropriate given that the down swing had begun. The failure to prevent its convening should have made that clear.

What about the contention of some boycotters that unlike the First and Second Dumas, the Third would be qualitatively worst and thus offer no opportunities for social democratic participation? Lenin objected,

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> the first two Dumas proved in fact to be only steps to the Octobrist [Third] Duma, yet we utilized them for the simple and modest purpose (propaganda and agitation, criticism and explaining to the masses what is taking place) for which we shall always contrive to utilize even the worst representative institutions. A speech in the Duma will not cause any "revolution," and propaganda *in connection with the Duma* is not distinguished by any particular merits; but the advantage that Social-Democracy can derive from the one and the other is not less, and sometimes even greater, than that derived from a printed speech or a speech delivered at some other gathering . . . [R]eaction inevitably drove us and *will continue to drive* us constantly into worse and worse quasi-constitutional institutions. Always and everywhere we shall uphold our convictions and advocate our views, always insisting that no good can be expected as long as the old regime remains, as long as it is not wholly eradicated. We shall prepare the conditions for a new upswing, and until it takes place, and in order that it may take place, we shall work still harder and not launch slogans which have meaning only when the revolution is on the upswing.[6]

Lenin concluded by addressing "the strongest and only Marxist arguments in favor of a boycott." That they found support among "the comrades who stand closest to direct proletarian work" had to be taken seriously. Weren't there signs, they contended, of a revival of the revolution, and couldn't the boycott slogan be used to assist in that process? Again, Lenin disagreed. First, it was necessary to recognize that there was in fact a "protracted lull" in the revolution and for very good reason—"the proletariat has not recovered . . . Indeed, the brunt of the October-December struggle was borne by the proletariat *alone*. . . No wonder that in a country with the smallest percentage of proletarian population (by European standards), the proletariat should have found itself utterly exhausted by such a struggle." (This demographic reality, I argue, explains why Lenin fought so insistently for the revolutionary alliance of workers *and* peasants.)

Second, while there was certainly evidence of an upswing, particularly the strikes of textile workers in Moscow—the reason for strong boycott sentiment among Bolsheviks there—it was only a "partial" one and not enough of a justification to issue a call to boycott the Third Duma. Third, there was no evidence of the kind of sentiment that existed leading up to the First Duma: "[N]o one believes in the Third Duma, i.e., among the strata of population that are capable of sustaining the democratic movement there is not and cannot be any of that enthusiasm for the constitutional institution of the Third Duma that undoubtedly existed among the public at large for the *First* Duma, for the *first* attempts in Russia to set up any kind of institutions provided they were *constitutional*." A boycott

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slogan now, therefore, "sounds rather odd." Last, the main task now was to act to "convert the partial upswing into a general upswing."[7]

Against Boycott constitutes Lenin's first balance sheet on the tactics of the revolutionary process in which he was a participant and constitutes a key document in his arsenal. Given the substantive issue around which it was weaved, it is evidence for the central claim of this book—namely, that the electoral and parliamentary arenas were at the center of his politics. That he also drew on the lessons of Marx and Engels, particularly the revolutions of 1848–49—which can be only noted here—to make his case is evidence also for one of the four arguments of this book.

Two weeks after the publication of *Against Boycott*, a delegated meeting of the St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) met in Terijoki (Zelenogorsk) Finland to take a position on whether to participate in the Third Duma. Lenin presented his two-page "theses" that distilled his argument while highlighting and elaborating on the "what is to be done" question. Again, the immediate task was to "convert" what was essentially a "trade-union upswing" in Moscow and its environs "into a revolutionary assault." "Only when the efforts of the Social-Democrats in this direction have been crowned with success, only on the basis of an aggressive revolutionary movement that has already come into existence, can the boycott slogan acquire serious importance in its inseparable connection with a direct appeal to the masses for an armed uprising, for the overthrow of the tsarist regime, and the replacement of the latter by a provisional revolutionary government, for the convocation of a constituent assembly on the basis of universal, direct, and equal suffrage by secret ballot."[8] The boycott as a tactic, therefore, was not to be abandoned but to be utilized at the right moment. The majority of the delegates rejected the boycottist theses submitted by Lev Kamenev and voted for Lenin's position to take part in the Third Duma—testimony to the power of his argument and persuasive skills.[9] Lenin's advice anticipated in many ways (to be seen later) decisions that would have to be taken about representative institutions in the heady days after February 1917.

A week later, in a more secure location in Finland, Kotka, a delegated conference of the entire party met to debate and decide how to relate to the Third Duma. Three resolutions were put to a vote: Lenin's theses; one presented by the Menshevik leader Fedor Dan, which also called for participation; and a third, that of another Bolshevik, Alexander Bogdanov, which called for a boycott. Lenin's resolution carried, once again. Only in hindsight would it be clear that the division within the Bolshevik ranks portended an eventual split.

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Though there is no mention of it in the extant real-time debate about whether or not to boycott the Third Duma elections, there was probably another issue that figured into the mix. Referring to a problem with a member of the Fourth Duma fraction (see Chapter 2), Lenin, a decade later, made an admission: "Following the unfortunate experience with several deputies from the First and Second State Dumas, we were not surprised that the 'high title' of State Duma member turned people's heads and sometimes 'ruined' them."[10] Evidently, some of the RSDLP deputies took their posts in the First and Second Dumas far more seriously than warranted—at least from a revolutionary communist perspective—and compromised their politics. Thus Lenin, in trying to convince the Bolshevik doubters about the need to participate in the Duma, probably had another hurdle to overcome.

In Anticipation of the Guns of August

Engels, in 1882, cautioned the newly emerging working-class parties in Europe against forming a new international; they should wait for the appropriate "moment." "Such events are already taking shape in Russia where the avant-garde of the revolution will be going in battle."[11] The two-decade delay in that "battle" explains, in part, why his advice wasn't heeded. By the time of his death in 1895, just such an organization was coming into existence: the Socialist or Second International. The German party, with the largest membership and biggest successes in the electoral arena, was widely recognized by then as its flagship affiliate. The RSDLP joined the organization after its founding, and in August 1907 Lenin was one of its delegates to its seventh congress in Stuttgart. "On a whole," as he later told the readers of *Proletary*, "the Stuttgart Congress brought into sharp contrast the opportunist and revolutionary wings of the international Social-Democratic movement on a number of cardinal issues and decided these issues in the spirit of revolutionary Marxism."[12] In a more detailed article, and to a larger audience, he was more specific: "The remarkable and sad feature in this connection was that German Social-Democracy, which hitherto had always upheld the revolutionary standpoint in Marxism, proved to be unstable, or took an opportunist stand . . . [O]n most issues, the representatives of Germany were leaders of opportunism." He quoted a comment Engels made in 1886 about the German party to explain this development: "'In Germany everything becomes philistine in calm times.'"[13] The absence of a revolutionary situation in Germany, in other words, enabled opportunism—an insight worth revisiting.

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The agenda item that immediately revealed the "sad feature" was the "colonial question." With Georg Vollmar—Exhibit A for Engels's critique of revisionism in the party[14]—and Edouard Bernstein in the lead, the German delegation tried to defend Imperial Germany's colonial project in the name of a "socialist colonial policy" (the "stench of Lassalleanism" as Marx and Engels might have charged). The entire Russian delegation, Lenin proudly reported—that is, Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, and Socialist Revolutionaries—rejected, along with the majority of other delegates, the idea that colonialism could have a "civilizing effect."

Women's suffrage, another agenda item, also revealed opportunistic tendencies, this time in the Austrian party. Party leaders, including Viktor Adler, tried to defend its demand for only universal male suffrage on the grounds that including women would jeopardize its chances for success. Clara Zetkin, a leader in the German party, had criticized this line prior to the congress. The "Austrians," in Lenin's summary of her comments, "had opportunistically sacrificed principle to expediency." Another German woman delegate who criticized the Austrians made a point that Lenin had often made about reforms: "'In principle we must demand all that we consider to be correct . . . and only when our strength is inadequate for more, do we accept what we are able to get. That has always been the tactics of Social-Democracy. The more modest our demands the more modest will the government be in its concessions.'" "This controversy"—Lenin in his own words—"between the Austrian and German women Social-Democrats will enable the reader to see how severely the best Marxists treat the slightest deviation from the principles of consistent revolutionary tactics."[15] The RSDLP had included women in its call for universal suffrage from the very beginning.

"The most important resolution of the Congress" was "that on anti-militarism." The discussion/debate centered on the appropriate response to a "notorious" figure in French politics, the one-time anarchist Gustave Hervé, who "tried to defend a very untenable position. He was unable to link up war with the capitalist regime in general, and anti-militarist agitation with the entire work of socialism." Though Hervé's knee-jerk response to any war with "strike action or an uprising" left much to be desired as far as the "stringency of orthodox . . . Marxist analysis" was concerned, there was a kernel of truth in it, and it served, inadvertently, a useful purpose. The counterresolution August Bebel offered was lacking—"a dogmatic statement of the general truths of socialism" that "failed to indicate the active tasks of the proletariat"—and gave an opportunistic opening to Vollmar:

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> With the extraordinary conceit of a man infatuated with stereotyped parliamentarism, he attacked Hervé without noticing that his own narrow-mindedness and thick-skinned opportunism *make* one admit the living spark in Hervéism, . . . it was this aspect of the question, the appeal not to prize only parliamentary methods of struggle, the appeal to act in accordance with the new conditions of a future war and future crises, that was stressed by the revolutionary Social-Democrats, especially by Rosa Luxemburg in her speech. Together with the Russian Social-Democratic delegates (Lenin and [J.] Martov—who here spoke in full harmony) Rosa Luxemburg proposed amendments to Bebel's resolution, and these amendments emphasized the need for agitation among the youth, the necessity of taking advantage of the crisis created by war for the purpose of hastening the downfall of the bourgeoisie, the necessity of bearing in mind the inevitable change of methods and means of struggle as the class struggle sharpens and the political situation alters.

The amendments, in other words, were revolutionary social democracy's alternative to the "parliamentary cretinism"—the language Engels and Marx employed to refer to the mistaken belief that the legislative arena was the alpha and omega of politics[16]—of Vollmar, the "dogmatism and passivity" of Bebel, and the "semi-anarchist" stance of Hervé on how to respond to war and militarism.[17] Lenin quoted favorably Zetkin's assessment of what transpired: "'[T]he revolutionary energy [*Tatkraft*] and courageous faith of the working class in its fighting capacity won in the end, winning, on the one hand, over the pessimistic gospel of impotence and the hidebound tendency to stick to old, exclusively parliamentary methods of struggle, and, on the other hand, over the banal anti-militarist sport of the French semi-anarchists of the Hervé type.'"[18]

The amended resolution carried overwhelmingly, by "nearly 900 delegates of all [25] countries." The near unanimity was deceptive, however. History would reveal that only the Russian party, with Lenin in the lead, took to heart what was adopted. The adopted resolution informed Bolshevik activities, both illegal and legal—for the latter, specifically, the "legal" work of its Duma fraction in both the Third and Fourth Dumas. Only in hindsight would it become clear that the weaknesses of the German delegation on not just the colonial but the war question foreshadowed how social democratic deputies in the Reichstag would respond when the Guns of August exploded seven years later.

Political Sobriety and Clarity

Unlike for the First and Second Dumas, Lenin uncharacteristically provided few details about the election campaign leading up to the convening

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of the Third Duma. The primary reason is that he had far fewer venues for publicizing his ideas. The qualitatively diminished political space registered the extent of Stolypin's "June coup d'état." Also, as his companion Nadezhda Krupskaya reported, on the eve of their flight from Finland into exile at the end of 1907 they had to destroy a lot of records, many that no doubt dealt with Lenin's involvement in the party's campaign activities.[19]

The elections, again, were conducted under circumstances most prejudicial to workers and peasants. First, the new electoral law made for a smaller Duma, from 518 to 442 deputies, and they would be elected by provincial assemblies. Peasants would be the biggest losers and the landed elite the biggest gainers, because representation of the former in the assemblies "fell from 43 to 22 percent" while that of the latter increased from "34 to 51 percent."[20] Worker representation would be reduced by half, and while they could still select electors in their curiae, the latter would no longer elect deputies to the Duma; that would be also be done by provincial assemblies in which the workers' electors participated with those of other curiae. "Since . . . the wealthy landowners and [urban] burghers were given a majority in these assemblies, they controlled the selection of peasant and worker representatives."[21] But "if all the electors of a worker curia nominated a Social-Democrat, the rest of the participants in the Gubernia [Provincial] Election Meeting were obligated to vote for him."[22] The number of cities represented in the Duma was reduced from 26 to 7. This also diminished worker influence, since they "had been a perceptible force in the urban assemblies."[23] Last, Great Russians were given more representation at the expense of national minorities. The more than 50 percent reduction in representation for the Caucasus, for example, where the RSDLP had been successful, would also diminish working-class influence.

Details on RSDLP preparations for the elections and campaign activity are thin in the English edition of the *Lenin Collected Works*. According to its only report on the party's campaign, from a conference of the St. Petersburg branch held in Terijoki, Finland, at the end of October, "the police used brutal violence against the working class voters during the elections to the Third Duma, prevented the Social-Democrats from conducting their election campaign, and so on."[24] Other sources indicate that the party, with Lenin intimately involved, formally launched its campaign at the beginning of July 1907, though the actual machinery wasn't in place until the end of the month or early August.[25] "They had to be watchful of government interference but this did not seem to inhibit the 'flying groups' of orators or prevent the calling of meetings in shops and

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factories."[26] Prior to then the Central Committee issued a platform statement, which essentially restated the basic party positions put forward in the First and Second Dumas, and eventually produced a campaign leaflet. Various party branches had discussions about electoral blocs and in general reaffirmed the position adopted at the London or Fifth Congress advocated by the Bolsheviks, which permitted alliances only with revolutionary parties, "left blocs," in the first rounds and none with the Cadets. In the workers' curiae, again, no blocs were permitted in the first rounds. On their behalf, the Menshevik leader J. Martov sought, not unexpectedly, more flexibility when it came to the Cadets, and it seems that he had some success depending on the specific locality. The St. Petersburg branch, in spite of the security risks, held a citywide meeting at the beginning of September to come up with a list of candidates for deputy to the Duma. Six Bolsheviks were selected to be the RSDLP electors.

Once the first round of elections got under way in September, it was possible to gauge levels of participation among different strata of the population and estimate their consequences. As for the peasantry, there was clearly less interest in the elections owing to how the process was constructed against the background of the failures of the First and Second Dumas to meet their principal demand—land. "The combination of indifference, apathy, absenteeism, political circumspection, and some clerical and official pressure were apparently effective in reducing the oppositional element among the peasantry."[27] Another likely factor was the boycottist stance of the Social Revolutionaries, who claimed to represent the interests of the peasants. That position certainly affected a layer of workers who were attracted to them as the elections to the Second Duma had revealed. "Absenteeism was rife, as in all other strata, exacerbated by the Social Revolutionary insistence on the boycott of the elections. In some localities from one-third to almost one-half of the constituencies did not participate in the primary elections." In factories where they had influence, including in some of the industrial districts in St. Petersburg, the abstention rate was overwhelming. "The Moscow workers, on the other hand, showed considerable interest in naming electors to the" provincial assemblies.[28] This suggests that Lenin's antiboycott campaign had born fruit in the place that had once been the center for Bolshevik opposition to participating in the elections and thus the need to see worker participation in larger perspective. "[C]onsidering the apathetic and pessimistic mood of the greater part of the electorate, the workers made an impressive showing in naming all of their electors. The boycott movement took its toll but they were

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accessible to the Marxist propagandists, and they were accustomed to demonstrating their economic and political power."[29]

With virtually all the election results in, Lenin offered analysis and advice: "According to a fairly accurate estimate the members elected are 18 Social-Democrats, 13 others of the Left, 46 Cadets, 55 members of groups standing close to them, 92 Octobrists, 21 members of groups belonging to allied trends, 171 members of various Right-wing trends, including 32 members of the Union of the Russian People, and 16 non-party deputies. Thus, not counting an insignificant number of non-party deputies, all the others may be divided into four groups: the extreme Left, constituting a little over 7 per cent, the Left (Cadet) Centre 23 per cent, the Right (Octobrist) Centre 25.1 per cent, and the Right 40 per cent; the non-party deputies are a little less than 4 per cent." As Lenin had correctly forecast, the Third Duma would be a Black Hundred or right-wing Duma. But it didn't have a clear majority. A coalition between it and the Octobrists would constitute the most stable majority—65 percent of the deputies. But there was another possibility, an Octobrist-Cadet coalition, because it could pick up a few nonparty deputies and the few remaining elections were likely to be in favor of either party. Despite the differences between the two majorities, they were both "counterrevolutionary" given the rightward trajectory of the Cadets in the first two Dumas. And therein lay a key—and also prophetic—political conclusion: "[The Third Duma] is *incapable of accomplishing the objective tasks of the revolution even in the most distorted form*. It cannot even partly heal the gaping wounds inflicted upon Russia by the old regime—it can only cover up those wounds with wretched, sour, fictitious reforms. The election results only confirm our firm belief that *Russia cannot emerge from her present crisis in a peaceful way.*"

The biggest danger for social democracy, Lenin contended in his first analysis of the elections in *Proletary*, would be to subscribe to the expected Menshevik position that the differences between the two majorities were meaningful as far as the interests of the toilers were concerned. The Octobrist-Cadet majority, they'd say, could be employed to advance the bourgeois democratic revolution and thus required support. Nothing could be further from the truth, he cautioned: "With the best will in the world, revolutionary Social-Democracy and, together with it, all the other revolutionary-minded elements of the Third Duma cannot use these conflicts in the interests of the revolution other than for purely propaganda purposes; there can be no question whatever of 'supporting' any of the conflicting sides, because such support, in itself, would be a counter-revolutionary act." As for differences within the Octobrist-Cadet

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majority, they "could be" utilized, but they too were "superficial and transient." While "not refraining" from using them, "*Social-Democracy must wage a stubborn struggle for democratic and revolutionary aims not only against the government, the Black Hundreds, and the Octobrists, but also against the Cadets*."

More important is what social democracy stood for. The resolutions of the Fifth or London Congress, he argued, were still operative. And particularly important, given the way in which the Third Duma came into existence, was the second part of the London resolution on "the immediate political aims of Social-Democracy in the Duma . . . to explain to the people the impossibility of achieving political freedom by parliamentary means as long as real power remains in the hands of the tsarist government, and to explain the inevitability of an open struggle of the masses against the armed forces of absolutism, a struggle aimed at securing complete victory, namely, the assumption of power by the masses and the convocation of a constituent assembly on the basis of universal, equal, and direct suffrage by secret ballot." While the electoral process for the First and Second Dumas left much to be desired, that for the Third didn't even try to pretend to be democratic. The fraction "must expose this crime, of course, not from the liberal stand point of a formal breach of the constitution, but as a gross and brazen violation of the interests of the broad masses of the people, as a shameless and outrageous falsification of popular representation."

And of course, there was the even larger picture about Duma work as stated in the London resolution:

> [T]he general character of the Duma struggle should be subordinated to the entire struggle of the proletariat outside the Duma, it being particularly important in this connection to make use of mass economic struggle and to serve the interests of that struggle . . . Peaceful legislative work by the Social-Democrats in the Third Duma under conditions which make mass movements highly probable would not only be inadvisable, would not only be absurd quixotry, but a downright betrayal of proletarian interests. It is bound to lead Social-Democracy to 'a whittling down of its slogans, which can only discredit it in the eyes of the masses and divorce it from the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.' The spokesmen of the proletariat in the Duma could commit no greater crime than this.

Finally, Lenin addressed the specifics of Duma work for the fraction: "The Social-Democrats in the Duma will carry out all these agitational, propaganda, and organizational tasks not only by their speeches from the Duma rostrum but also by introducing Bills and making interpellations

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to the government . . . of course, Bills and questions of a consistently democratic character." The party had under its belt some experience in carrying out these tasks, but in the new Duma it would be more difficult. The rules required having 30 deputies to sign on to the introduction of a bill or an interpellation. In the new Duma there would only be 18 social democratic deputies. The fraction therefore would have to reach out to the much-reduced peasant Trudovik fraction and "other groups"—only those "to the left of the Cadets"—to get the necessary signatures. Lenin advised them to do so as long as principles weren't compromised: "It is not, of course, a question of any bloc, but only of those 'joint actions,' which, in the words of the London Congress resolution, 'must exclude any possibility of deviations from the Social-Democratic programme and tactics and serve only the purpose of a general onslaught both against reaction and the treacherous tactics of the liberal bourgeoisie.'"[30]

Lenin's proposals became the basis for resolutions voted on at two delegated party meetings held to orient itself to the soon to be convened new Duma. The first was that of the St. Petersburg branch, which met on October 27 in Terijoki, Finland. The only addendum was a concrete measure to facilitate "joint actions" with the democratic opposition: "To avoid a repetition of the mistakes made by the Social-Democrats in the Second Duma, the Social-Democratic group should immediately propose to the Left, and only to the Left, deputies of the Duma (i.e., those capable of fighting the Cadets) the formation of an Information Bureau which would not bind its participants but would enable the workers' deputies to exert systematic influence upon the democratic elements in the spirit of Social-Democratic policy." By a vote of 37 to 12 the meeting adopted Lenin's resolution and in the process rejected a Menshevik proposal "supporting the 'Left' Octobrists in the Third Duma and voting for a 'Left' Octobrist in the elections to the Duma presidium."[31]

A week later at an all-party conference, the Fourth, in Helsingfors (Helsinki), the delegates in their majority voted in favor of Lenin's resolution, this time in opposition not only to the Mensheviks but to the Jewish Bundist party faction as well. It included another addendum with three directives to the now christened "Social-Democratic group": "(1) to come forward with a special declaration; (2) to make an interpellation concerning the coup d'état of June 3; (3) to raise in the Duma, in the most advisable form, the question of the trial of the Social-Democratic group in the Second Duma."[32] The third point referred to the impending trial of the 55 social democratic deputies arrested in Stolypin's June 1907 coup d'état.

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The Bolshevik-Menshevik differences on the eve of the convening of the Third Duma posed, once again, the norms of democratic decision making within the RSDLP. One issue concerned the fact that the Mensheviks had formed—apparently after the London Congress, where they lost their majority position on the Central Committee—a secret center that they utilized to promote support for a Cadet-Octobrist majority in various branches of the party—in opposition to the decision of the July or Third All-Party Conference not to do so. The Fourth Conference adopted a resolution to strengthen the Central Committee so that, hopefully, this wouldn't happen again.

The other issue concerned what Menshevik leader Georgi Plekhanov had done—specifically, his decision to voice his disagreement with the Third Conference's opposition to support for a Cadet-Octobrist majority in the pages of a left-bourgeois publication. He suggested that he did no more than what Lenin had done when Lenin published his pamphlet scandalizing the then Menshevik-dominated Central Committee at the beginning of 1907 for trying to cut a deal with the Cadets on the eve of the elections for the Second Duma and for which he was later brought up on charges for violating party discipline. Lenin countered that he had every right to make his exposure because he was challenging the Central Committee for not upholding the decisions regarding electoral alliances of the Stockholm or Fourth Congress, the highest decision-making body of the party. Also, Lenin said, he went public with his opposition in a pamphlet, whereas Plekhanov employed the pages of a bourgeois publication with a long record of hostility to the RSDLP. The majority of delegates at both meetings—looking to the German party for guidance on this issue—agreed with Lenin "that *political* participation in the bourgeois press, especially the supposedly non-party press, is absolutely inadmissible."[33] The debate on party norms revealed, once again, that democratic centralism was still a work in progress.

The very public Bolshevik-Menshevik disagreements provoked an inevitable schadenfreude response, "malicious chuckling," from opponents. "But Who Are the Judges?" Lenin sarcastically asked. "The liberals," he charged, "sneer at the struggle within Social-Democracy in order to cover up their systematic *deception* of the public in regard to the Cadet Party . . . There are no records of the proceedings of the Cadet congresses. The liberals issue no figures of their party membership either as a whole or by organizations. The tendency of the different committees is unknown. Nothing but darkness . . . Lawyers and professors, who make their career by parliamentarism, hypocritically condemn the underground struggle and praise open activity by parties while actually flouting the democratic

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principle of publicity and concealing from the public the different political tendencies with in their party."

As for the Socialist Revolutionaries, they, too, he charged, were no paragons of transparency. Founded in 1901, the "December Congress of the Party . . . in 1905 was the first and only one to publish minutes of the proceedings." But even then it failed to take advantage of the then existing political space in the way the social democrats had: "[D]uring the period of the greatest liberties, the period of most direct influence upon the masses, they *concealed* from the public the existence of two different tendencies within the party. The differences of opinion were as great as those within the Social-Democratic ranks, but the Social-Democrats tried to clarify them, whereas the Socialist-Revolutionaries tried diplomatically to conceal them . . . 'Not to wash one's dirty linen in public' is a thing the S.R.'s are adept at." The RSDLP, he contended, was willing to do exactly that because "there can be no mass party, no party of a class, without full clarity of essential shadings, without an open struggle between various tendencies, without informing the *masses* as to which leaders and which organizations of the Party are pursuing this or that line. Without this, a party worthy of the name cannot be built, and we are *building* it. We have succeeded in putting the views of our two currents truthfully, clearly, and distinctly before everyone." The problem for the Socialist Revolutionaries, he concluded, "is that it is impossible for them to create a mass party, impossible for them to become the party of a *class*." Their penchant for terrorism registered this fact. "Your terrorism, gentlemen, is not the outcome of your revolutionism. Your revolutionism is confined to terrorism."[34] Subsequent history would confirm Lenin's judgment.

THE THIRD DUMA CONVENES

The circumstances under which the RSDLP's Duma fraction was elected—Stolypin's prejudicial electoral law of June 1907—presented the party with new challenges. And not the least of them was the fact that Lenin had to exercise direction from a considerable distance. For the First and Second Dumas he did so, if not always from St. Petersburg, then from nearby Finland. For the Third Duma it would have to be from Geneva, Paris, Crackow, and elsewhere, with all the logistical and security challenges that presented. Coupled with a very inexperienced fraction—almost all the previous members were either in jail or in exile—Lenin had his work cut out for him.

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First Unsteady Steps

The first substantive issue that the social democratic group had to deal with was the budget, specifically a Cadet proposal for "extending the budgetary powers of the Duma." As was true for the Second Duma, the budget debate—one of the reasons for its dissolution—had the potential, Lenin repeated, to expose the reality of parliamentary government in Czarist Russia. Therefore he criticized—both comradely and pedagogically—the fraction in the first issue of the Central Committee's illegal organ *Sotsial-Demokrat* for signing on to what was apparently just a procedural matter about the proposal.

The main problem was that the Cadet proposal, not surprisingly, sidestepped the obvious: "The Russian Duma has no budgetary powers, for '*by the law*' the rejection of a budget does not prevent it from being put into execution"—what had actually occurred when the Second Duma couldn't agree on Stolypin's budget. "Thus, the *only* object of raising and debating this question in the Duma could be that of exposing the whole truth. Practical reform activity could *not*, at this time and in this situation, be the aim of a *democrat*, because, first, the impossibility of reforms on the basis of the existing Fundamental Laws of the Duma's budgetary powers is obvious, and secondly, it would be absurd, in a Duma composed of Black-Hundred die-hards and Moscow merchants, to propose that *its* powers, the powers of such a Duma, should be extended . . . A democrat should reveal to the people the *gulf* that lies between the powers of parliament and the prerogatives of the monarch, and not deaden the public mind, not distort *the political struggle* by reducing it *to an office-routine correction* of the laws."

Before his critique Lenin offered some positive reinforcement: "The speech by the representative of the Social-Democrats, Pokrovsky 2nd, we gladly acknowledge, reveals a quite *different* spirit, presenting the issue in a *fundamentally* different way. The Social-Democrat stated bluntly and clearly that he considered popular representation in the Third Duma *falsified* (we are quoting *Stolichnaya Pochta* [Metropolitan Post, a Left Cadet St. Petersburg paper] for January 18, since the verbatim reports of this session are not yet available). He stressed not minor points, not the official derivation of the law, but the ruined and oppressed state of the masses, of the vast millions of the people. He rightly declared that 'one cannot speak of the budgetary powers of the Duma without irony,' that we were demanding not only the right to recast the whole budget . . . but to 'remodel the whole financial system' and 'reject the government's budget.' He concluded with a no less correct and, for a member of the workers' party, obligatory demand for 'full power of the people.' On all

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these points Pokrovsky conscientiously and correctly upheld the Social-Democratic point of view."

But by voting with the entire Duma to have the Cadet proposal sent to committee without any instructions, the social democratic group undermined, Lenin argued, the force of Pokrovsky's intervention. Especially egregious, "judging by newspaper reports," was the fraction having directed Pokrovsky to declare, "'*We support the proposal . . . because it tends towards an extension of the budgetary powers of a popular representative assembly.*'" In fact, the proposal, apparently unbeknownst to the fraction, had been effectively rendered null and void through an agreement the Cadets reached with the Octobrists. There was a lesson in this that Lenin tried to impart to the young fraction: "For the hundredth and thousandth time 'support' given to the Cadets led to those who supported them being deceived. For the hundredth and thousandth time the *facts* have revealed how shoddy and impermissible are the tactics of supporting liberal, Cadet proposals."

He then gave an example of a proposal, even if offered by the Cadets, that the fraction could have supported and the advantages in doing so:

> If the Cadets, instead of joining with the Octobrists, had *put to the vote* a declaration stating clearly and precisely that the Duma was powerless in financial matters, that popular representation was falsified, that the country had been ruined by the autocracy and a financial débâcle was unavoidable, and that under such circumstances the democratic representatives would not give their support to any loans—that would have been an honest act on the part of the bourgeois democrats, an act of struggle and not an act of dull-witted flunkeyism. It would have been our duty to support such an act, while not forgetting to stipulate our own independent Social-Democratic objectives. Such an act would have contributed to the enlightenment of the people and the exposure of the autocracy. The defeat of such a declaration in the Duma and the violent opposition such a proposal would have raised among the Black Hundreds would have been a historical service rendered by the democrats and probably a new phase in the struggle for freedom. But now the Cadets have once again *proved bankrupt*. Social-Democratic comrades in the Duma, protect the honour of the socialist workers' party! Do not allow yourselves to suffer failure by giving support to such liberalism!

In offering constructive criticism, Lenin was careful about the facts—thus we see the qualifiers "judging by newspaper reports," "so says *Stolichnaya Pochta*," or even "we should like to believe that *Stolichnaya Pochta* did not tell the truth." Being much farther from the scene, Lenin had to rely

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on sources that were not always as reliable—another challenge for Third Duma work.

Lenin's article on the budget was reprinted in the illegal Bolshevik paper *Proletary* with a "Postscript": "Unfortunately, the first budgetary speeches of our Duma comrades are very lame and deeply mistaken. In the next issue of *Proletary* we shall deal in detail with these mistakes and indicate what we believe to be the necessary line of action for Social-Democrats in the budgetary debates and voting." The tone here was more critical, and it anticipated increasing Bolshevik discontent with the social democratic group.

Saber Rattling in the Balkans

On February 27, 1908, the Duma addressed the foreign policy of the regime. This was a first, since neither of the two previous Dumas had ever done so. The opportunity came with a discussion on appropriations for the ministry of foreign affairs. While the regime applauded the deliberations and vote that day to fund its request, couched in thinly veiled language that endorsed domestic and foreign aggression, for Lenin it was "A Police-Patriotic Demonstration Made to Order." Not only did the Octobrists, as expected, wrap themselves in the banner of patriotism in bowing to the government's wishes, but the Cadets did as well. "The *entire* Russian bourgeoisie, *Left* as well as Right, had to be made to formally express its confidence in the government, in its 'peaceful policy,' its stability, its intentions and ability to pacify and tranquillise. It was necessary as the blank endorsement of a bill." In so doing, in other words, the Cadets and the rest of the bourgeoisie enabled Nicholas to have access to West European creditors.

> In three years Russian liberalism has gone through an evolution which, in Germany, took over thirty years, and in France over a hundred—an evolution from adherents of freedom to spineless and contemptible henchmen of absolutism. The specific weapon of struggle which the bourgeoisie possesses—the possibility of putting pressure on the purse, of withholding funds, of upsetting the "delicate" approaches for new loans—this weapon could have been used by the Cadets many times during the Russian revolution. And on each occasion, in the spring of 1908 just as in the spring of 1906, they surrendered their weapon to the enemy, licking the hand of the pogrom-makers and swearing loyalty to them.

Lenin noted that prior to this patriotic display of the Cadets in the Duma, Pyotr Struve, one of their leaders, had written an article to provide

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theoretical justification for this "evolution in the ideology of Russian liberalism." He "already advocates the idea of a 'Great Russia,' the idea of bourgeois nationalism; he attacks 'the intelligentsia's hostility to the state,' for the thousandth time striking out at 'Russian revolutionism,' 'Marxism,' 'renegades,' the 'class struggle,' and 'banal radicalism.'" Successfully playing the patriotic card required, therefore, an attack on revolutionary social democracy. Not surprisingly, Lenin welcomed Struve's article: "Mr. Struve wants a frankly counter-revolutionary liberalism. We want it, too, because this 'frankness' of liberalism will best of all enlighten both the democratic peasantry and the socialist proletariat." In hindsight, the February 27 session of the Third Duma, the unleashing of patriotism, signaled the opening shot in Russia's contribution to the Guns of August six years later.[35]

There was, however, as Lenin ended, one notable dissent from the February 27 love fest—also in anticipation of 1914: "[I]t should be said that the only honest and proud word of a democrat came from a *Social-Democrat*. Deputy Chkheidze took the floor and declared that the Social-Democratic group would vote *against* the Bill. He started to give the reasons, but after his first words: 'Our diplomacy in the West has always been a bulwark of reaction and served the interests of . . .' the Chairman stopped the mouth of the workers' deputy." Despite having been silenced, the deputy set an example: "The workers' deputy stood isolated on this question. This is all the more to his credit. The proletariat should show, and it will show, that it is capable of defending the behests of the democratic revolution despite all the treacheries of liberalism and the waverings of the petty bourgeoisie."[36]

Lenin's praise was timely, because within half a year he would call on the social democratic group to emulate Chkheidze. The occasion was a new upsurge in the world revolutionary process and the predictably counterrevolutionary response of Europe's last absolutist state, especially since it shared borders with the two countries most affected. In his first sustained writing about international affairs, "Inflammable Material in World Politics," Lenin explained that the Young Turks revolt and that lead by Sattar Khan in Persia were delayed echoes of Russia's own revolution. Nicholas had every reason, therefore, to make sure they didn't succeed. As well he saw an opportunity to take advantage of the turmoil in Turkey to lay claim, in cahoots with European governments, to Ottoman Empire possessions in the Balkans—the consequences of which would only become clear six years later. Because of the regime's conscious misrepresentation of the facts about what was taking place in Turkey and Persia and the thinly veiled enabling of Nicholas by the Cadets, "our

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Duma deputies and all our Party organizations must bear in mind that we cannot make a single serious step forward in Social-Democratic propaganda and agitation about the Balkan events without revealing—from *the Duma rostrum*, in leaflets and at meetings—the *connection* between the reactionary policy of the autocracy and the hypocritical opposition of the Cadets. We shall never be able to explain to the people how harmful and reactionary the policy of the tsarist government is, unless we explain that Cadet foreign policy is *essentially the same*. We cannot combat chauvinism and the Black-Hundred spirit in foreign policy, unless we combat the phrase-mongering, the posing, the mental reservations and dodges of the Cadets."

After detailing the machinations of the regime and their Cadet cheerleaders in both the Persian and Turkish theaters, Lenin spelled out what was at stake for both the Duma fraction and other units of the party:

> An extremely onerous, but at the same time extremely noble and momentous task falls now to the Russian Social Democratic deputies in the Duma, where a statement by [Foreign Minister] Izvolsky and a question by the Cadets and Octobrists are expected. The Social-Democratic deputies are members of a body that is a screen for the policy of the chief reactionary power, the chief plotter of counter-revolution, and they must find in themselves the courage and ability *to tell the whole truth*. At a time like this, the Social-Democratic deputies in the Black-Hundred Duma are people to whom much is given and of whom much is required. For apart from them there is *no one* in the Duma to voice the protest against tsarism from positions *other* than those of the *Cadets* and Octobrists. And a Cadet "protest," at such times and in the present circumstances, is worse than no protest at all since it can be made only *from amidst the selfsame* capitalist wolf-pack, and on behalf of the selfsame wolfish policy.

It was crucial that the fraction and the other party organizations collaborate intimately in this task, because "agitation among the masses is now a hundred times more important than in ordinary times." Lenin then honed in on three issues the antiwar campaign should focus on. First, "[o]ur job is to reveal the *fact* that there exists a reactionary conspiracy of the [European] powers, a conspiracy which the governments are doing everything they possibly can to conceal behind the farce of public negotiations . . . Secondly, we should reveal the real, as distinct from the asserted, results of this conspiracy, namely, the blow to the Turkish revolution, Russia's assistance in strangling the Persian revolution, interference in the affairs of other nations, and violation of that fundamental democratic principle, the right of nations to self-determination." Last,

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"[a]ll the bourgeois parties, including the most liberal and 'democratic' in name, our Cadets included, support capitalist foreign policy. That is the third thing which the Social-Democrats must with special vigor bring to the knowledge of the people." The Cadets only differ with the Black Hundreds on how to carry out such a policy; "these liberal reproaches leveled at the government for lagging behind other countries (in rapine and intervention!) have the most corrupting effect on the masses." Social democracy demands, "Down with all colonial policy, down with the whole policy of intervention and capitalist struggle for the conquest of foreign lands and foreign populations, for new privileges, new markets, control of the Straits [of Dardanelles], etc.!"

When the saber rattling began in the summer of 1908, Lenin said, "a European war seemed dangerously close . . . [but now in October] it is much more probable that the whole thing will end up in shouting and clamor and war will be avoided."[37] Though right in the short run, Lenin's optimism wasn't rewarded by subsequent history. His Duma-centered antiwar campaign, however, proved to be prescient—a dress rehearsal for Russia's social democrats when the storm clouds returned in 1914.

"The Revolutionary-Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry"

While Stolypin's electoral law effectively reduced peasant and worker presence in the Third Duma, from 157 to 13 and 67 to 18 respectively out of 442 deputies, the worker-peasant alliance that Lenin sought and fought for through the Duma process came closer to realization. And this was despite the fact that, owing to the law, peasant deputies had been "sifted through a number of police sieves, even though elected by landlords, even though intimidated by the Duma diehards." That process also eliminated, for the most part, deputies who could be identified as Trudoviks, the bane of the regime in the two previous Dumas. So particularly heartening were the initiatives of "a group of non-party peasants, some of them from the *Right* wing," that called "for compulsory alienation of the land and for the local land institutions elected *by the whole population!*" Even one Cadet deputy had to admit that "'on the agrarian question the stand of the 'Right' peasants in all three Dumas has been more Left than the Cadets.'"

With more details about the initiatives, Lenin seized on a Cadet lamentation about the "Trudovik spirit" of the new deputies. Two bills had been submitted, one by peasant deputies and the other by clergy deputies, that both called for land committees "elected on the basis of universal, direct and equal suffrage by secret ballot." They were quite similar to the

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Trudovik bills submitted in the First and Second Dumas and lobbied against by the Cadets. What the latter called for instead were committees that would "consist of an equal number of representatives of the peasantry and of the landlords, with a *representative of the government*, as a third party. In other words, the Cadets were betraying the muzhik [peasant] to the landlord, by assuring that everywhere the latter would have the majority (the landlords plus a representative of the landlord autocracy are always in a majority against the peasants)."

Lenin relished the fact that "even the clergy—those ultra-reactionaries, those Black-Hundred obscurantists purposely maintained by the government—have gone further than the Cadets in their agrarian Bill." And why could that be? "The village priest will have to return from the most police-ridden Duma into his own village: and however greatly the village has been purged by Stolypin's punitive expeditions and chronic billeting of the soldiery, *there is no return to it* for those who have taken the side of the landlords. So it turns out that the most reactionary priest finds it more difficult than the enlightened lawyer and professor to betray the peasant to the landlord."[38] In saying "*there is no return to it*" and "finds it more difficult," Lenin pointed to a reality about the countryside that was of enormous importance for his argument about the "nature" of Russia's revolution. The peasantry not only had more democratic credentials than the liberals but was willing to use force and violence to defend its interests—a point to which he returned.

When the land question was debated again later in the session, Lenin was furnished "with exceptionally valuable material" to make his case. First, the speeches of the Octobrist and Black Hundred representatives were particularly useful because of their blatant defense for the first time of the landlord interests—"[t]hese gentlemen cannot even imagine any capitalism that is not based on the preservation of landlordism, i.e. feudalist landownership"—and conscious counterrevolutionary sensibility. "For agitation among the masses, the study of extracts [of those] . . . speeches . . . is absolutely necessary . . . very valuable material for the awakening of those sections of the people who are politically unconscious or indifferent . . . [T]he speeches of the Right [are] incomparably more valuable material, both for the scientific analysis of the present situation and for purposes of agitation, than the speeches of the half-hearted and cowardly liberals."

Despite the attempt of the Cadet speakers to "reconcile the irreconcilable, to straddle two stools," Lenin distilled for his *Proletary* readers the fundamentally prolandlord antidemocratic feature of their proposal presented by a "Mr. Berezovsky," specifically the aforementioned composition

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of the local land committees to decide on compulsory alienation: "The 'democrats' fall so low that they try to prove to the Black-Hundred diehards how inoffensive their actions and programs are at a time of revolution!" The speeches of the peasant deputies, on the other hand, were starkly different:

> Take a typical Right-wing peasant, Storchak. He begins his speech by repeating in full the words of Nicholas II about "the sacred rights of property," the impermissibility of their "infringement," etc. He continues: "May God grant the Emperor health. He spoke well for the whole people" . . . And he finishes: "But if His Majesty said that there should be justice and order, then, of course, if I am sitting on 3 dessiatines of land, and next to me there are 30,000 dessiatines, that is not order and justice"! Compare this monarchist with the monarchist Berezovsky. One is an ignorant peasant, the other an educated almost-European. The first is as innocent as a babe unborn and amazingly ignorant politically. The link between the monarchy and "order," i.e., the disorder and injustice which protect the owners of 30,000 dessiatines, is not clear to him. The second is a skilled politician who knows all the ins and outs to Witte, Trepov, Stolypin and Co., and who has studied the niceties of European constitutions. The first is one of those millions who toil and moil all their life on 3 dessiatines, and whom economic realities *drive* into mass revolutionary struggle against the holders of 30,000 dessiatines. The second is one of the tens of thousands or at most one hundred thousand landlords who wants "peacefully" to keep his "cultured estate" by throwing a sop to the peasant. Is it not clear that the first *can* make a bourgeois revolution in Russia, *abolish* landlordism and set up a peasant republic (however much this word may frighten him now)? Is it not clear that the second *cannot but* hinder the struggle of the masses without which the victory of the revolution is impossible?
>
> Those people who still cannot for the life of them understand what "the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" means, should give some thought to this!

For Lenin, the contrasts between the speeches of Storchak and Berezovsky and the proposals they presented—Storchak submitted the same one the peasant deputies did in the earlier session—could not have been more instructive. They gave lie to the Menshevik claim that an alliance with the Cadets was needed for Russia's bourgeois revolution: "[C]lass-conscious workers will only be strengthened in their conviction, after reading the debates in the Third Duma, that a victorious bourgeois revolution in Russia is impossible without a joint onset by the worker and peasant masses, in spite of the waverings and betrayals of the bourgeoisie." Lenin quoted other peasant deputies who made clear that they and

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their constituents were prepared to defend with force their interests—more evidence for his "democratic dictatorship" formula.

An important measure of the road the peasant deputies had traveled politically is that "all politically conscious peasants ['Trudoviks'] supported nationalization" of the land. One of the two social democrats who spoke, Belousov, provided data, in a speech drafted by Lenin—and based on a soon to be published book—in support of nationalization. As for the interventions of the two social democrat deputies, both "comrades . . . did their duty properly . . . Both speeches by the Social-Democratic spokesmen in the Third Duma should be kept for handy reference by every member of the Party who carries on the work of propaganda and agitation." There was only one glitch: the failure to mention nationalization "without compensation," a key party demand. But the oversight wasn't intentional, which "would have been an important breach of our program."

Lenin's purpose was clear: to use the pages of *Proletary*—or any other venue at his disposal—to convince workers that a revolutionary alliance with the peasantry was doable. His evidence was the speeches and proposals presented in the Duma by all parties—to be used for "propaganda and agitation." No wonder he would continue to defend the value of Duma work in the face of growing opposition among some Bolsheviks.

The "Flight of the Intellectuals"

Six months after Stolypin's coup, Lenin drew a balance sheet on the state of the party. "On the Straight Road" contended that the "worst was over." The repression had clearly taken a toll on the party. Most symptomatic of that fact, as one local report put it, the "intellectuals, as is well known, have been deserting in masses in recent months." As long as the revolution was in the ascent and space existed to do legal political work, intellectuals flocked to the revolutionary cause. The crackdown, however, made the cause less appealing to that social layer. But, as a growing number of new reports began to reveal, there was an upside to the "mass desertion": "[T]he general conclusion reached is that 'in a number of places responsible work, owing to the flight of the intellectuals, is passing into the hands of the advanced workers' . . . The Party has already entered the straight road of leadership of the working masses by advanced 'intellectuals' drawn from the ranks of the workers themselves." This change was reflected in the advances the party was beginning to make in trade union work—both legal and illegal—and in the cooperatives.

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Lenin then made a significant admission about another arena of party legal work, the Duma, specifically the election of social democrat deputies to the Third Duma:

> Strange though it may sound, it is a fact that we cannot all at once raise the work of our parliamentary representatives to a Party level—just as we did not all at once begin to work "in a Party way" in the co-operatives. Elected under a law which falsifies the will of the people, elected from the ranks of Social-Democrats who have preserved their legality, ranks which have thinned very greatly as a result of persecution during the first two Dumas, our Duma Social-Democrats *in effect* inevitably were at first non-party Social-Democrats rather than real members of the Party.
>
> This is deplorable, but it is a fact—and it could hardly be otherwise in a capitalist country entangled by thousands of bonds inherited from serfdom and with a legal workers' party that has been in existence for only two years. And it was not only non-party people who wanted on this fact to base their tactics of setting up a non-revolutionary Social-Democracy, but also those . . . Social-Democrat-like intellectuals who clustered around the Duma group like flies round a honey-pot.

The circumstances under which the deputies were elected, against the background of mass arrests of social democrats or their being forced into exile, made for a fraction that had a lot to learn.

Lenin was cautiously optimistic that progress was being made while being realistic:

> We will not undertake to prophesy, nor shall we close our eyes to what vast efforts are still required to organize more or less tolerable parliamentary Social-Democratic work in our conditions. But we may note that in the first issue of the Central Organ [*Sotsial-Demokrat*] there is Party criticism of the Duma group, and a *direct resolution* of the Central Committee about better direction for its work. We do not by any means consider that the criticism in the Central Organ covers all the defects . . . What is basic and most important is that the transformation of the Duma group into a really Party organization now features in all our work, and that consequently the Party will achieve it, however hard this may be, and however the road may be beset with trials, vacillations, partial crises, personal clashes, etc.

Ensuring that the Duma fraction was "a really Party organization" required a real party, and that, Lenin felt, was being realized after the collapse: "A strong illegal organization of the Party Centers, systematic illegal publications and—most important of all—local and particularly factory Party groups, led by advanced members from among the workers themselves,

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living in direct contact with the masses: such is the foundation on which we were building, and have built, a hard and solid core of a revolutionary and Social-Democratic working-class movement. And this illegal core will spread *its* feelers, *its* influence, incomparably wider than ever before, both through the Duma and the trade unions, both in the co-operative societies and in the cultural and educational organizations."[39]

Having boycotted the Third Duma, the Socialist Revolutionaries felt they had license to "sneer at the *mistakes*" of the inexperienced social democratic group. As for their speeches, "'Who knows anything about these statements, about these votings and abstentions'?" "Yes," Lenin fired back, "our Social-Democratic deputies in the Third Duma have made many mistakes. And this very example the S.R.s chose to quote demonstrates the difference in the attitude of *a workers' party* and *a group of intellectuals*":

> A workers' party understands that in a period of political lull and collapse the latter must inevitably show itself in the Duma group too, since in the Third Duma it was even less capable than in the Second of assembling large party forces. Therefore the workers' party criticizes and corrects the mistakes of its deputies. Every organization, by discussing each speech and arriving at the conclusion that such-and-such a statement or speech was a mistake, provides material for political action by the masses . . . And our criticism of their mistakes is done publicly, and openly, before the masses. Our deputies learn from this criticism, the classes learn, the Party learns—the Party which has seen hard times, and knows that it is not by ranting but only by the stubborn and steadfast work of *all* organizations is it possible to emerge with honor from a difficult situation. Even *Proletary*, which, as a newspaper published abroad, realized that it was under an obligation to give its advice from afar with care, openly proposed measures for improving the work of the group. Our open Party criticism, added to the work of the group, achieves the result that the masses know both the Duma statements and the *nature* of the Party's corrections to them. And failure to appreciate the Duma work at a time when Party organizations and the Party press are facing the effects of the deep collapse, is a sign of boundless intellectualist irresponsibility.

Such transparency, he concluded, was necessary in meeting the main challenge the party faced: how "to combine open speeches in the Duma with illegal Party activity." Solving this problem would "guarantee" that "the proletariat will be able, under the leadership of Social-Democracy, to fight more ably and more unitedly, and to gain more decisive victories" when the next revolutionary phase opened.[40] Events within a few years would test the accuracy of Lenin's forecast.

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AGAINST THE "RECALLISTS": ROUND ONE

It was in the Moscow branch of the RSDLP, it may be remembered, where the greatest opposition to participating in the Third Duma existed. Though Lenin won over the vast majority against the boycottists, it is no coincidence that it was in Moscow where a new anti–Third Duma tendency emerged, known as the otzovists or recallists. Fueled largely by the "mistakes" of the social democratic group, they—led by, again, Bogdanov—argued that the party should recall the deputies and effectively dissolve the fraction. At a party conference in Moscow in June 1908, the recallists failed to get the majority of the branch to support their position, but that didn't end their campaign. *Proletary* opened its pages in its November issue to their argument, to which Lenin responded publicly for the first time in "Two Letters."

Lenin methodically dissected and exposed the shortcomings of the otzovists' argument. Quoting the comrade who wrote one of the letters on their behalf, he charged that he "exaggerates" the importance of Duma work—the obverse of Menshevik parliamentary cretinism:

> Nowhere under any conditions, even in the most "ideal" bourgeois-democratic republic, would revolutionary Social-Democracy agree to recognize its parliamentary group either as the "natural fulfillment" of the Party or as *its* "diplomatic representative." Such a view is deeply fallacious. We send deputies into bourgeois and bourgeois-Black-Hundred representative institutions not for diplomacy, but for a special type of subsidiary Party work, for agitation and propaganda from a particular rostrum. Even when there is an "ideal" democratic franchise, the parliamentary group of a workers' party will always bear certain traces of the influence of the general bourgeois circumstances in which the elections take place: for example, it will always be more "intellectual" than the Party as a whole, and therefore we shall never recognize the group to be the "fulfillment" of the Party. The parliamentary group is not a general staff (if I may be allowed to use a "military" simile side by side with the "diplomatic" one used by the writer), but rather a unit of trumpeters in one case, or a reconnaissance unit in another, or an organization of some other auxiliary "arm."
>
> The otzovist comrade has transformed the parliamentary group from a *subsidiary Party organization* into the "fulfillment" of the Party in order, by *exaggerating* the significance of the group, to attribute an entirely wrong character to the activity of the contingent which we have sent into the bourgeois-Black-Hundred Duma.

As for the comrade's second argument that since the masses are "indifferent to all that goes on within the walls of Tauride Palace" and therefore

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it's a waste of time for social democrats to be there, Lenin drew out its implications:

> "If the masses are indifferent, then the Social-Democrats should be indifferent too." But we are a party *leading* the masses to *socialism*, and not at all one which follows every change in mood or depression in the spirits of the masses. All Social-Democratic parties have had to cope at times with the apathy of the masses, or their infatuation with some error, some fashion (chauvinism, anti-Semitism, anarchism) . . . but never do consistently revolutionary Social-Democrats yield to every changing mood of the masses. One can and must criticize the bad policy of Social-Democrats in the Third Duma, when they carry on a bad policy there; but to say that the agitation is of no value *because* of the complete indifference of the masses, means to talk in a non-Social-Democratic way.

The fundamental problem with the comrade's argument, Lenin charged, is that he wanted to throw out the proverbial baby with the bath water. The task before the party, rather, was how to correct "the bad policy of Social Democrats in the Third Duma," not to dissolve the fraction and walk away from Duma work—and that was "only just beginning":

> We have not yet had a single Party conference telling the group firmly and clearly that it must correct its tactics in such-and-such definitely specified respects. We have not as yet a central organ appearing regularly, following every step of the group on behalf of the whole Party and giving it direction. Our local organizations have done still very, very little in that field of work—agitation among the masses on the subject of every speech of a Social-Democrat in the Duma, explaining every mistake in this or that speech. Yet we are being asked to give it all up, to declare the struggle hopeless, to renounce use of the Duma rostrum at times like the present of 1908.

One of the problems the party faced was the glomming on to the fraction of "bourgeois 'well-informed persons'"—that is, liberal intellectuals who ("like flies round a honey-pot," as he put it earlier) sought to be its "advisors." A similar problem arose with the Second Duma, but with the Bolshevik leadership far from the scene this time, intellectuals like S. N. Prokopovich had better access to the deputies. But as Lenin pointed out, even that problem was now being confronted.

Lenin was especially vigilant about liberal intellectuals vis-à-vis the working class, and nothing he wrote is as insightful as what he said about one of them:

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> There is no need to fear the landlords' influence on the people. They will never succeed in fooling any considerable number of workers or even peasants for any lengthy period. But the influence of the *intelligentsia*, who take no direct part in exploitation, who have been trained to use general phrases and concepts, who seize on every "good" idea and who sometimes from sincere stupidity elevate their inter-class position to a *principle* of non-class parties and non-class politics—the influence of this bourgeois intelligentsia on the people is dangerous. Here, and here alone, do we find a contamination of the masses that is capable of doing real harm and that calls for the utmost exertion of all the forces of socialism to counteract this poison.[41]

After listing the "serious mistakes" of the fraction and making some concrete proposals about the direction of its work by the Central Committee, Lenin concluded: "Needless to say one should criticize the group, it is dishonest to hush up its mistakes. But all of us have also to strengthen our organizations in the local areas, and develop the agitation to make use of every act by the Duma group. Only the combination of the two forms of work is activity really worthy of consistent revolutionary Social-Democrats, and only this combination will help us to overcome 'the moment of stagnation' and hasten the arrival of a new upsurge."[42]

Earlier in the year, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Marx's death, Lenin made a contribution to a symposium. His "Marx and Revisionism" drew a balance sheet on Marxism and its critics. Of particular relevance here is the claim of "liberals . . . that bourgeois parliamentarism destroys classes and class divisions, since the right to vote and the right to participate in the government of the country are shared by all citizens without distinction."

> The whole history of Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the whole history of the Russian revolution in the early twentieth, clearly show how absurd such views are. Economic distinctions are not mitigated but aggravated and intensified under the freedom of "democratic" capitalism. Parliamentarism does not eliminate, but lays bare the innate character even of the most democratic bourgeois republics as organs of class oppression. By helping to enlighten and to organize immeasurably wider masses of the population than those which previously took an active part in political events, parliamentarism does not make for the elimination of crises and political revolutions, but for the maximum intensification of civil war during such revolutions.[43]

Nothing better explains why Lenin was so insistent in maintaining a Duma fraction. It's useful to recall, in grasping his point, his retort to

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the otzovist comrade in "Two Letters." The basic tasks of revolutionary social democratic parliamentary work, he emphasized, didn't distinguish between "ideal" bourgeois republics as in some Western European countries and the not-so-ideal as the "Black Hundred representative institution," the Third Duma. He held social democracy to the same standards no matter the setting. This is important in understanding how he increasingly viewed—one of the arguments of this book—the participation of social democratic parties in Western European parliaments leading up to the First World War.

To "Organize Social-Democratic Parliamentarism in Russia on a Different Basis"

"We have not yet had a single Party conference telling the [Social Democratic] group firmly and clearly that it must correct its tactics in such-and-such definitely specified respects." Lenin's complaint in his "Two Letters" would soon be rectified. Two leadership meetings in Paris at the end of 1908 and in June 1909 took the proverbial bull by the horns. Only in hindsight would it be clear that the party's parliamentary work was put on a firmer footing—a corner had been turned. At the end of the Third Duma in 1912, the party, despite the bumps along the way, was in a much stronger position to effectively use Duma work when the long-expected revival in the class struggle materialized.

The Paris Meetings and a By-Election

"The conference was the first authoritative meeting of delegates from the biggest Party organizations to discuss the work of the Duma Social-Democratic group during the whole session."[44] Such was the significance, in Lenin's opinion, of the Fifth (All-Russian) Conference of the RSDLP, held in Paris from December 21 to 27. In many ways it codified the arguments he had been making for some time in defense of Duma work and how to make it more effective. Most important, it recognized "that the blame for the group's deviations does not rest on the group alone, for it has to work in the extremely difficult conditions of a reactionary Duma, but is shared to some extent by all the organizations of the Party and its Central Committee, which have not by far yet done all that was necessary and possible to organize the Party's work in the Duma on proper lines." And to achieve that goal, "attention must be focused on building up and strengthening the illegal Party organization; and that only under the unfaltering influence of this organization can all work among the masses, all control of the Duma group, all the activity of the Party around

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the Duma group, all use of legal and semi-legal organizations, be properly arranged, without any debasing of the class aims of Social-Democracy." This resolution was explicitly directed at a newly emerged tendency in the party, "the liquidationist trend," that argued that given the repression it faced the party should "legalize [itself] . . . at all costs, even at the price of an open renunciation of the Party program, tactics and organization." The liquidationists, as they would be called, were influenced, Lenin charged, by the "flight of the intellectuals."[45]

In his report on the conference, Lenin pointed out that the difficulty the party faced in making sure the Duma fraction acted in accord with "the *political line* of the Party" was not unique to Russian social democracy:

> In the history of West-European socialist parties there have been a number of instances of abnormal relations between the parliamentary groups and the Party; to this day these relations are quite often abnormal in the Latin countries, where the groups do not display sufficient Party spirit. We must from the very outset organize Social-Democratic parliamentarism in Russia on a different basis; we must at once establish team-work in this field—so that every Social-Democratic deputy may really feel that he has the Party behind him, that the Party is deeply concerned over his mistakes and tries to straighten out his path—so that every Party worker may take part in the general Duma work of the Party, learning from the practical Marxist criticism of its steps, feeling it his duty to assist it, and striving to gear the special work of the group to the whole propaganda and agitation activity of the Party.[46]

This clearly reveals, possibly for the first time—and relevant to one of the arguments of this book—that the more involved Lenin became in Duma work the more conscious he became of the shortcomings of social democratic parliamentary work elsewhere, particularly in Western Europe, and he increasingly criticized its modus operandi.

Precisely to avoid "abnormal relations" between the parliamentary group and the party, the conference provided "practical instructions" to the fraction, a first for such a meeting, specifically on how to vote on budget items. In general, the fraction should refrain from voting for a budget proposed by a Black Hundred government. When uncertain they should consult the Central Committee or some other party organizations (see Appendix A, "Practical Instructions on Voting for the Budget by the Social-Democratic Group in the Duma"). On this and the other resolutions suggested there was common agreement by the end of the conference. Subsequent events would soon reveal, however, that the near unanimity at the meeting was deceptive.

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Two recallists attended the Paris conference but "did not raise the question openly," Lenin noted. However, in Moscow and St. Petersburg, with Bogdanov leading the charge, the recallists became increasingly vocal. They were joined by another tendency, which argued that the Duma fraction should be given an opportunity to mend their ways, and if they didn't then they should be recalled; they became known as the "ultimatumists." Because both tendencies arose among Bolshevik ranks, it became increasingly clear that another meeting, a Bolshevik one this time, would have to be held to see if the differences could be resolved. So important was this issue to Lenin that he wrote he would "leave the [Bolshevik] faction immediately" if the recallist line prevailed.[47]

In the meantime, there were signs that Lenin's effort to patiently work with the fraction was beginning to bear fruit. When the Duma began its debates in the spring of 1909 on the budget proposals for the state-funded Russian Orthodox Church, it opened a wide-ranging discussion for the social democrats about religion. For Lenin, it was a great opportunity to implement the decisions of the Paris conference—that is, the need to coordinate the activities of the Duma fraction, legal work, with party building, illegal work—to show the skeptics that Duma work could in fact be valuable. Using the pages of *Proletary* and *Sotsial-Demokrat*, he explained to their readers the basics of the Marxist position on religion, how it differs from a liberal critique of religion, why "Social-Democracy's atheist propaganda must be *subordinated* to its basic task—the development of the class struggle of the exploited *masses* against the exploiters," and the practical implications for recruiting workers who are religious and even priests. The speech of one of the two comrades who intervened in the debates was indispensable for party work:

> The Social-Democrat Surkov, representing the workers' party and the working class, was the only person in the Duma to raise the debates to the truly high level of principle, and said without beating about the bush what the attitude of the proletariat is towards the Church and religion, and what should be the attitude in this matter of all consistent and vigorous democrats. "Religion is the opium of the people . . . Not a farthing of the people's money to these murderous enemies of the people who are drugging the people's minds"—this straightforward, bold and outspoken battle-cry of a socialist resounded like a challenge to the Black-Hundred Duma, and met with the response of millions of proletarians, who will spread it among the masses and who will know how to translate it into revolutionary action when the time comes.[48]

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And then Lenin gave specific instructions to the illegal wing of the party to ensure that the "masses . . . will know" what Surkov said: "[His speech] should be circulated by all the organizations. In its discussion of this speech the Duma group demonstrated that it is fulfilling its Social-Democratic duty conscientiously. It remains to express the wish that reports on discussions within the Duma group should appear more often in the Party press so as to bring the group and the Party closer together, to acquaint the Party with the difficult work being done within the group, and to establish ideological unity in the work of the Party and the Duma group."[49]

In June, a meeting of four members of the editorial board of *Proletary*, the five Bolsheviks on the Central Committee, and three representatives from the St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Ural party branches in Russia took place in Paris. The main agenda item was the question of otzovism, or recallism, and ultimatumism. With improvements in the functioning of the Duma fraction and therefore the recallists garnering less support, Lenin focused most of his attention on the arguments of the ultimatumists. A distinction, he argued, had to be made between those who saw the "ultimatum" to the fraction to improve its work as only an incentive or form of "pressure" versus those for whom it hung over their heads as a "sword of Damocles" that effectively "rules out *constructive, creative* Party work on the Duma group." The former were tolerable, because they held open the possibility of improvement, whereas the latter were not because the logic of their line was otzovism and eventually "syndicalism and anarchism." The former resembled a kind of otzovism that prevailed among a layer of workers "largely [as] a result of being uninformed about the work of the Duma group." "The best way to combat *this kind* of otzovism is, first, wide publicity among the workers to keep them fully informed on the work of the Duma group and, secondly, to afford the workers opportunities to come into regular contact with the group and influence it. Otzovist sentiment in St. Petersburg, for instance, could be counteracted to a large extent by arranging a number of talks between our comrades in the Duma and the workers of St. Petersburg."

Lenin's arguments were formalized in resolutions, and they passed on a ten-to-two vote and a ten-to-one and one abstention vote. Bogdanov was the main dissenter and stated that he couldn't go along with the decisions of the majority. The "extended editorial board of *Proletary* henceforth disclaims any responsibility for the political actions of Comrade Maximov [Bogdanov]." Rather than a split, his actions constituted effectively a "breakaway" from the Bolsheviks.[50]

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Finally, and especially important, Lenin gave a speech in which he drafted a resolution that was the most detailed to date on Duma work, "The Tasks of the Bolsheviks in Relation to Duma Activity"(see Appendix B). In addition to concrete suggestions on how the speeches of the Duma fraction could be publicized through leaflets—"Parliamentary speeches will always say less than anything. The i's will be dotted by the leaflets"[51]—Lenin raised the "delicate matter" of the mechanics of coordinating the work of the fraction with the party. It was "delicate" because it involved working with the Menshevik leaders of the party, who weren't necessary on the same political page with Lenin about how to conduct this work. A special committee, the "Paris promotion group" or the "Promotion Commission for the Duma Social-Democratic group," was proposed, and Lenin thought that it "should be set up under the C.O."—that is, the Central Organ, *Sotsial-Demokrat*, of the party rather than the Central Committee. Also, "nothing can be done in the Duma group without well-informed persons from the Bolsheviks. For this we should legalize two or three men. One suggestion is Vadim, and perhaps Kamenev."[52]

In his "Tasks" speech, Lenin made for the first time in the form of a party resolution the distinction between the "revolutionary Social-Democratic use of the Duma and the reformist (or more broadly, opportunist) use." He spelled out how this distinction played itself out in regard to both the "external relations" of the Duma group and the "internal content of the group's activity." When Lenin writes that the experiences of "West-European Social-Democrats" should be utilized but "special care" had to be taken "to avoid the opportunist distortion" of the group's "internal" activities, the significance of the distinction is clear—key evidence for, again, my argument about his growing awareness of reformism in the West European parliamentary arena as he deepened his involvement in and defense of this work. The document serves as a blueprint for Bolshevik parliamentary work henceforth and thus warrants reproduction in full; see Appendix B.

To appreciate how committed Lenin was to the bourgeois democratic revolution and utilizing whatever extant space to advance its cause, consider the effort he made to get the St. Petersburg branch of the party to participate in a by-election in September 1909. The opportunity came about after a Cadet deputy was expelled from the Duma, but it was fraught with challenges: "The election is taking place in a situation where the Social-Democratic Party and all working-class organizations whatsoever have been totally outlawed, where it is utterly impossible to hold meetings of workers, where the workers' press is totally banned, where

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the 'opposition' is (through police measures) entirely monopolized by the Cadet Party, which has prostituted itself by a series of unprecedented acts of flunkeyism in the Black Duma." All the more reason, Lenin argued, why social democracy should participate—an opportunity to expose the Cadets "before the mass of petit-bourgeois voters and remind them of the aims of real democracy which have been forgotten by the bourgeois democratic parties and groups." He urged the St. Petersburg comrades to put forward a candidate and offered advice on how to conduct the campaign—his first opportunity to apply the resolutions adopted at the extended editorial board meeting of *Proletary* a few months earlier:

> [E]veryone can and must take part in the Social-Democratic election campaign. Some can draw up and distribute the election manifestoes of the Social-Democrats; others can help to circulate the Duma speeches of the Social-Democrats; some can organize a canvass of the electors in order to propagate Social-Democratic ideas and explain the aims of the Social-Democrats in the election campaign; others will speak at meetings of voters or at private meetings; still others can cull a bouquet of extracts from Cadet literature and Cadet speeches that will cure all honest democrats of any desire to vote for the Cadets; . . . but it is not for us in a newspaper published abroad to point out ways and means of agitation, ways and means will be found locally, in St. Petersburg, a hundred times richer, livelier and more varied. The members of the Social-Democratic group in the Duma can, by virtue of their position, render particularly valuable services to the election campaign in St. Petersburg; here the Social-Democratic deputies have a particularly useful and particularly grateful part to play. No administrative prohibitions, no police traps, no confiscations of Social-Democratic literature, no arrests of Social-Democratic agitators can prevent the workers' party from doing its duty, namely, to make full use of the election campaign to spread among the masses the whole, undiluted program of the socialist proletariat, the vanguard in the Russian democratic, revolution.

Lenin was heartened to learn after writing these lines that the Trudoviks "unanimously decided to support the candidature of the Social-Democrat Sokolov"—concrete evidence that the worker-peasant alliance he fought to forge via the electoral and parliamentary arenas was operative.[53]

"The masses must come out of this election campaign more party-conscious, more clearly aware of the interests, aims, slogans, points of view and methods of action of the different classes—that is the permanent result which the political trend represented by N. D. Sokolov values above everything."[54] Since there are no extant balance sheets that Lenin drew on the election campaign, it's difficult to say how successful it was

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as measured by these criteria. It didn't help, as Lenin complained, that Bogdanov and other ultimatumists "did *in effect* put a spoke in the wheel of the election campaign that had just begun" by getting the executive committee of the St. Petersburg organization to pass a resolution that discouraged active participation.[55] Though it was later rejected by a more representative meeting, the resolution seems to have taken a toll. Despite the decisions of the Paris meetings, the recallist-ultimatumist tendency continued to get a hearing as long as the Duma fraction hadn't perfected its modus operandi—what Lenin continued to work on.

"Steady Progress"

A year after the first Paris meeting, Lenin wrote, "The work of the Social-Democrats in the Duma makes steady progress, becoming free from the mistakes that were inevitable at the outset, overcoming skepticism and indifference, forging the weapon of revolutionary propaganda and agitation of organized class struggle, so valued by all Social-Democrats."[56]

The progress the fraction was making had much to do with the careful attention not only to political perspective but to details that Lenin provided. No better example of that were the corrections and suggestions he made on behalf of a Central Committee "subcommittee"—no doubt the aforementioned "Promotion Commission"—to a draft bill drawn up by a Duma fraction member calling for the eight-hour work day (see Appendix C).[57] Written sometime after the St. Petersburg by-election, his response constitutes the most concrete evidence so far of the close collaboration established at least by then between the social democratic group and Lenin on behalf of the party. Before addressing the specifics of the proposal, he made clear that the "main aim of the Bills introduced by the Social-Democrats in the Third Duma must lie in *propaganda and agitation* for the Social-Democratic program and tactics. Any hopes of the 'reformism' of the Third Duma would not only be ludicrous, but would threaten completely to distort the character of Social-Democratic revolutionary tactics and convert it into the tactics of opportunist, liberal social-reformism." He then listed "five conditions" for realizing this aim.

With these "basic premises" he dissected the draft of the "author"—so termed, I suspect, for security reasons. He complimented him for having adapted model eight-hour work day bills drawn up by Western European social democratic parties to "Russian conditions" but stated that "our subcommittee" felt it needed "a number of corrections" because in "a few cases the author . . . tries to adapt his Bill to the requirement of 'practicality.'" He offered some suggestions—for example, about the

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scope of the bill—and then a concrete proposal about "the question of the *gradual* introduction of the eight-hour working day." Most interesting was his point about how to explain why the proposed bill called for such an introduction—certainly "not in order to 'adapt' the Bill to the measure of the capitalist government"—whereas the "revolutionary Soviets of Workers' Deputies of 1905 called for *immediate* realization of the eight-hour working day." The explanatory note accompanying the bill should say that in a real revolutionary situation "it is *essential* not to stop at anything—in short, in conditions resembling those of November 1905—the Social-Democrats regard the *immediate* introduction of the eight-hour working, day as not only legitimate but even *essential*."[58] It will be useful, I argue, to revisit Lenin's suggestion in assessing Bolshevik policies in the heady days of 1917.[59]

The Duma group's response to "Stolypin's notorious declaration of March 31," 1910, revealed that it indeed had come a long way. The background to this was the ongoing tug of war between the monarchy and those in the Duma like the Cadets and Octobrists who wanted a constitutional monarchy. The specific issue was how much input the Duma had in funding the military.[60] As Lenin unceasingly explained, the Duma was the product of the mass uprising that forced Nicholas to grant concessions including the Fundamental Laws, the closest thing to a constitution in Romanov Russia. The inconclusive outcome of the revolution was reflected in the ambiguities of the laws. Article 96, more to the point, apparently gave the Duma the right to approve military expenditures, but another provision, Article 14, suggested that the monarchy had the last word. Even though the counterrevolution was victorious with Stolypin's June 3 coup in 1907, three years later it still had nightmares about the revolution (the proximity of Turkey's Young Turks' revolution in 1908 also weighed on their brains). Anything, however faint, that suggested the revolution was alive, such as the idea that the military should be subject to the "collective will," sent a cold shudder up their monarchial spines.

When the issue returned in 1910, Stolypin, in his declaration, sided with Nicholas and effectively overruled Article 96—"reduced to nullity"—in favor of Article 14. That the Octobrists approved of his actions was no surprise, but that the Cadets sounded like apologists for Stolypin was "just one more example of how low" their party "has fallen." The challenge for the social democratic group was how to denounce his actions without giving an inch to the "constitutional illusions" of the Cadets and Octobrists:

> [T]he Social-Democrats unquestionably undertook a complicated task *requiring able handling*; they were undoubtedly wielding a double-edged

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> weapon which with the slightest mistake or even awkward usage might wound the bearer. To speak without metaphors, it might imperceptibly lead the Social-Democrats astray from the policy of class struggle to the policy of liberalism.
>
> The Social-Democrats would have made such a mistake if they had spoken purely and simply of "defending" these fundamental laws, without explaining the *special* character of this "defense." They would have made an even greater mistake had they turned the defense of the fundamental laws or legality in general into some sort of slogan such as "fight for legality"—that would have been in the style of the Cadets.
>
> Fortunately, our comrades in the Duma did neither the one nor the other.

Lenin then excerpted the interpellations of the two comrades. The first, Gegechkori, defended, Lenin proudly reported, the fraction against the thinly veiled threats of the Rights to have it ejected from the Duma for questioning the "prerogatives of the 'imperial leader.'" The deputy then made clear that the fraction's interventions were in no way to be interpreted as "'upholding the prestige of the Third Duma, if it has such a thing.'" Their purpose was "'only . . . for exposing once again the hypocrisy of the government.'" "Gegechkori voiced the consistently democratic, republican views of the socialists when he said: 'our laws will correspond to the interests and requirements of the mass of the population only when they are dictated by the *direct will of the people*,' and the '*clamour from the right*' noted in this part of the verbatim report emphasized that the shaft had gone home."

The second comrade, Pokrovsky, "spoke even more clearly and definitely in his speech," referring to the political significance of the interpellation: "'Let them (the Octobrists) do this directly and openly. Let them frankly accept the slogan of the Rights: "Down with the right of the popular representative assembly, long live the ministerial antechamber!" There is no doubt that the majority is working to bring about a time in Russia when constitutional illusions will completely vanish, leaving a black reality from which the Russian people will draw the appropriate conclusions.'"

The two comrades acted in "the only correct Social-Democratic way of presenting the interpellation." The rest of the party now had a task:

> [T]his is the aspect that must be brought to the fore in our Party agitation, at labor meetings, in our study circles and groups, and, finally, in private conversations with workers who do not belong to any organization. We must explain the role of the workers' party, which is *exposing* a bourgeois Black-Hundred fraud inside the bourgeois Black-Hundred Duma

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itself. Inasmuch as it was not possible in *such* a Duma to treat the question with *complete* clarity or to state in full detail the revolutionary Social-Democratic point of view, it is our duty to amplify what our comrades said from the tribune of the Taurida Palace and popularize their speeches, so that the masses can understand and appreciate them.[61]

The Finnish Question

Another issue that warranted in Lenin's view the attention of Russian social democracy and the Duma group in particular was Stolypin's moves beginning in 1908 to end the limited sovereignty the Finish people had enjoyed until then. From 1809 when Finland came under Romanov rule, its prospects for self-determination depended on the ups and downs of the democratic revolution in Russia. At its height, the end of October 1905 through the first two Dumas, the Finnish people enjoyed their greatest freedom. With Stolypin's coup in June 1907, however, the regime sought to reestablish Romanov supremacy. That Finland had served as a safe house for revolutionaries like Lenin during Russia's "spring" was not the least important reason for doing so. The Octobrists took the initiative in this revanchist project in 1908 with a proposal that the "Black Hundred Duma" should act as the monarchy's police to bring the Finnish people to heel—an attempt to convince Nicholas that the Duma could be a loyal servant and thus he had nothing to fear about their constitutional monarchy project.[62] Though the particulars are lacking, the social democratic group, according to Lenin, voiced their opposition.

When the issue returned in 1909, he provided more details. While the "bandits' venture has everything in its favor," given the continuing lull in Russia's democratic movement, the "proletariat of Finland knows that from the outset of its new struggle it will have on its side the socialist proletariat of all Russia, ready, however onerous the conditions of the contemporary moment, to do their duty, *their whole duty*." The Duma fraction had a special duty because their counterpart in the Finnish Diet

has sent a deputation to the Social-Democratic group in the Third Duma in order jointly to discuss a plan of action against the coercionists. From the lofty tribune of the Duma our deputies will raise their voice, as they did last year, to brand the tsarist government and unmask its hypocritical allies in the Duma. Let then all the Social-Democratic organizations and all workers exert every effort so that the voice of our deputies in the Taurida Palace is not a cry in the wilderness, so that the enemies of Russian and Finnish liberty see that the whole Russian proletariat is one with the Finnish people. The duty of the comrades in each locality is to use every opportunity that presents itself to make manifest the attitude of the

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> proletariat of Russia to the Finnish question. Beginning with appeals to the Russian and Finnish Social-Democratic groups, and proceeding to more active forms of protests, the Party will find ways enough to break the disgraceful conspiracy of silence in which the Russian counter-revolution is rending the body of the Finnish people.[63]

Whether or not Finland's proletariat knew that their Russian comrades would be "on its side" is uncertain; what is clear is Lenin's call, a joint response of the Duma group and party organizations campaign, to make that a reality—exactly what he called for when the Guns of August exploded in 1914.

In 1910 Stolypin took the initiative by introducing a bill in the Duma that would put Finland's "internal affairs," which the Finnish people had hitherto managed themselves, "under the jurisdiction of the arch-reactionary Octobrist Duma! *The utter destruction of Finland's freedom*—that is what is being undertaken by the autocracy." This time Lenin sought to bring clarity to the debates for both the fraction and the readers of *Sotsial-Demokrat*, specifically the role of the bourgeoisie in "reinforcing . . . the old nationalism . . . of the autocracy." The championing of such a policy by the Octobrists registered the "growing class-consciousness and consciously counter-revolutionary attitude of our Russian bourgeoisie. Chauvinism has grown among them with their growing hatred of the proletariat as an international force. Their chauvinism has grown stronger parallel with the growth and intensification of the rivalry of international capital. Chauvinism appeared as a thirst for revenge engendered by the losing of the war with Japan and the powerlessness of the bourgeoisie against the privileged landlords. Chauvinism has found support in the appetites of the true Russian industrialists and merchants who are glad to 'conquer' Finland after failing to grab a slice of the pie in the Balkans. Therefore, the representative assembly of the land lords and big bourgeoisie gives tsarism true allies for *settling* with free Finland."

As for the liberal bourgeoisie, the Cadets, while they, "of course, are *against* the persecution of Finland" and "will certainly not vote with the Octobrists," they in fact enabled the "old nationalism" of the autocracy. Referring to the earlier debates on the Balkans and Struve's influential article, Lenin continued, "Was it not the Cadets who did their utmost to rouse nationalist feelings and sentiments throughout Russian educated 'society'? How right the Social-Democratic resolution (of December 1908) [the Paris party conference] was in saying that the Cadets by their nationalist agitation were *in fact* rendering a service to tsarism and no one else! . . . So now, most 'humane' gentlemen of the Cadet Party, reap what you have sown." Lenin concluded prophetically,

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"[E]ach act of tsarist policy, each month of the existence of the Third Duma is more and more mercilessly destroying the liberal illusions, more and more exposing the impotence and rottenness of liberalism, scattering ever wider and more abundantly the seeds of a new revolution of the proletariat."[64]

There is no way Lenin could have known that his real-time insight would be tragically confirmed by events four years later—the role of both the Right and Left bourgeoisie in promoting the autocracy's war drive. He was able to be prescient precisely because of what the Third Duma, "the representative assembly of the landlords and big bourgeoisie," taught—again, why he was so insistent that it was in the interest of the proletariat to take its deliberations seriously and to use it, however limited the opportunities, for offering a working-class alternative.

A couple of months after the fraction's "able handling" of Stolypin's Declaration of March 31, Lenin gave an extensive response to the just-produced "platform" of the recallists in his sixty-page pamphlet, *Notes of a Publicist*. He stated his central argument at the outset:

> The autocracy has entered a *new* historical period. It is taking a step towards its transformation into a bourgeois monarchy. The Third Duma represents an alliance with definite classes. The Third Duma is not an accidental, but a necessary institution in the system of this new monarchy . . . We are confronted by a *specific* historical period with *specific* conditions for the birth of a new revolution. It will be impossible to master these specific conditions and prepare ourselves for this new revolution if we operate only in the old way, if we do not learn to utilize the Duma tribune itself, etc.

Stolypin's bill on Finland would no doubt have been for Lenin a good example of his use of the Third Duma to convert the "autocracy . . . into a bourgeois monarchy." This, he argued, is what the recallists failed to grasp about the interim period: the unique role of the Third Duma, unlike the two previous ones, in consolidating the counterrevolution while preparing at the same time the conditions for the inevitable rebirth of the revolution. Therefore "*there can be no question* of utilizing the transition period without utilizing the Duma tribune. The peculiar tactics of using the very tribune from which the counter-revolutionaries speak *for the purpose* of preparing the revolution thus becomes a *duty* dictated by the specific character of the *entire* historical situation." If, as Lenin suspected, the recallists, or many who were attracted to their cause, found functioning in such a way in such a setting far less exciting than when the revolution was still in full bloom, he readily conceded:

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> But the transitional period is transitional precisely because its specific task is to prepare and rally the *forces*, and not to bring them into immediate and decisive action. To know how to organize this work, which is devoid of outward glamour, to know how to utilize for this purpose all those semi-legal institutions which are peculiar to the period of the Black-Hundred-Octobrist Duma, to know how to uphold *even on this basis* all the traditions of revolutionary Social-Democracy, all the slogans of its recent heroic past, the entire spirit of its work, its irreconcilability with opportunism and reformism—such is the *task of the Party*, such is the task of the moment.[65]

In an earlier retort, he was less diplomatic but more concrete:

> Get this into your heads . . . when the conditions of acute and increasing reaction are really present, when the mechanical force of this reaction really severs the connection with the masses, makes sufficiently broad work difficult and weakens the Party, it is then that the specific task of the Party becomes to master the parliamentary weapon of struggle; and that . . . is not because parliamentary struggle is higher than any other forms of struggle; no, it is just because it is *lower* than them, lower, for example, than a struggle which draws into the mass movement *even* the armed forces, which gives rise to mass strikes, uprisings, etc. Then why does mastery of the lowest form of struggle become the specific (i.e., distinguishing the present moment from other moments) task of the Party? Because the stronger the mechanical force of reaction and, the weaker the connection with the masses, the more immediate becomes the task of preparing the minds of the masses (and not the task of direct action), the more immediate becomes the task of *utilizing* the methods of propaganda and agitation *created by the old regime* (and not a direct onslaught of the masses against this old regime).[66]

The lull in the revolutionary movement that enabled the counterrevolutionary policies that Stolypin and the autocracy pursued made clear to Lenin—if not from the outset—that work in the Third Duma had a very different character than that in its two predecessors.

In an article on the Bolshevik-Menshevik split in *Neue Zeit* published sometime in 1910, Trotsky charged that neither wing of the party knew how to function in legal organizations: "'Even the most important legal organization, in which the Mensheviks predominate, works completely outside the control of the Menshevik faction.'" Lenin knew better: "[T]he facts are as follows. From the very beginning of the existence of the Social-Democratic group in the Third Duma, the Bolshevik faction, through its representatives authorized by the Central Committee of the Party, has all the time assisted, aided, advised, and supervised the work

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of the Social-Democrats in the Duma. The same is done by the editorial board of the Central Organ of the Party, which consists of representatives of the factions."[67] Thus at the end of 1910 Lenin confirmed in print what the public record only suggested until then—that is, he was effectively the party's electoral and parliamentary director. No one else had taken on such a responsibility; the experience would serve him well for the Fourth Duma. But Trotsky's uninformed criticism was revelatory—most of the Duma fraction members were Mensheviks! Never did Lenin hint so much in his published utterances. Taking into account the way in which they were elected, he treated them as if they were teachable. Labels such as "Mensheviks" were simply that for him—another indication of how important this work was for him.[68]

Social Democratic Parliamentary Work: Lessons from Elsewhere

In the discussions/debates about whether to participate or not in the parliamentary arena, Lenin (and his opponents as well) often referenced the experience of German social democracy. The historic debate Marx and Engels had with the anarchists about involvement in both arenas only intensified as working-class parties inspired by their vision came into existence. Owing to its size and success the German party was the favorite target of the anarchists, and Lenin had to take on their charge—which got an echo from the recallists—that the German party practiced "parliamentarism at any price." "In point of fact the German Social-Democrats, far from standing for parliamentarism at any price, not only do not subordinate everything to parliamentarism, but, on the contrary, in the international army of the proletariat they best of all have developed such extra-parliamentary means of struggle as the socialist press, the trade unions, the systematic use of popular assemblies, the socialist education of youth, and so on and so forth."

The German party's usage of the parliamentary space, he also argued, was determined by the particular situation it faced, and not the least important was the period in which Bismarck's Anti-Socialist Law was in effect, 1878 to 1890, during which the party, except for its Reichstag Fraktion, was banned—a situation not unlike what the Russian party faced after Stolypin's coup and the convening of the Third Duma. "The point is that a combination of a number of historic conditions has made parliamentarism a *specific* weapon of struggle for Germany over a *given period*, not the chief one, not the highest, not of prime and essential importance in comparison with other forms, but merely specific, the most characteristic in comparison with other countries. Hence, the ability

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to use parliamentarism *has proved to be a symptom* (not a condition but a symptom) of exemplary organization of the *entire* socialist movement, in *all* its branches, which we have enumerated above."[69]

But wasn't there a basis for the anarchist charge given that the German party gave birth to opportunism and reformism—Bernstein et al.? Lenin, of course, was well aware of this development from the very beginning and had drawn attention to it—such as his critique of the Germans at the 1907 Stuttgart Congress of the Second International. The party's 1910 Magdeburg Congress provided the most recent evidence. "Two Worlds," the title of his article about the gathering, were revealed in the German party: "the point of view of the proletarian class struggle" versus "the point of view of the reformist." Unlike the anarchists, however, Lenin felt the first tendency, led by Bebel, was hegemonic in the party. The evidence was the overwhelming defeat for those who advocated the reformist line.

Most relevant for the Russian experience was the substance of Bebel's attack on the reformists at the congress. In Lenin's reading of his speech, Bebel was preparing the party for "the maturing revolution in Germany." And key to Bebel's strategy, according to Lenin, was the continued usage of legality in anticipation of an "era of tremendous revolutionary battles" while knowing the bourgeoisie would be forced for that very reason to "shatter his own legality."[70] Rather than what the anarchists claimed about the German party, the Magdeburg Congress demonstrated that social democracy could make usage of the parliamentary arena without succumbing to opportunism. Whether Lenin's optimism about the Germans was warranted will, of course, be revisited. Clearly, his reading of Bebel and the congress reflected his views and actions that parliamentary work could be put toward revolutionary ends.

At the end of 1910, Lenin reviewed in the first issue of the legal Bolshevik daily *Zvezda* [*The Star*], the successor to *Proletary*, "an interesting attempt at a scientific investigation" to explain the emergence of the "two big trends" in the working-class movements in Europe and America "departing from Marxism"—"revisionism (opportunism, reformism) and anarchism (anarcho-syndicalism, anarcho-socialism)." Dutch Marxist Anton Pannekoek's recently published book, *The Tactical Differences in the Labor Movement*, reached "conclusions, which, it must be recognized, are quite correct." Three factors, according to Pannekoek, explained their emergence: (1) the "very growth of the labor movement"; (2) its heterogeneous character and development; and (3) the different tactics ruling classes employed to discipline the labor movement. When the latter decided, for example, to play the hard cop, as in Germany with Bismarck's Anti-Socialist Law, they engendered "the growth of

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anarcho-syndicalism." When they employed "the method of 'liberalism,' of steps towards the development of political rights, towards reforms, concessions, and so forth," it bred "opportunism in the labor movement." While the "revisionists . . . regard reforms as a partial realization of socialism," the "anarcho-syndicalists reject 'petty work,' especially the utilization of the parliamentary platform." "Both anarcho-syndicalism and reformism must be regarded as a direct product of this ['one-sided'] bourgeois world outlook and its influence. They seize upon *one* aspect of the labor movement, elevate one-sidedness to a theory, and declare mutually exclusive those tendencies or features of this movement that are a specific peculiarity of a given period, of given conditions of working-class activity. But real life, real history, *includes* these different tendencies, just as life and development in nature include both slow evolution and rapid leaps, breaks in continuity." Although Pannekoek's argument made no reference "to Russia *at all*," it "seems that he is alluding to [it] . . . only because the basic tendencies which give rise to definite departures from Marxist tactics are to be observed in our country too, despite the vast differences between Russia and the West."[71] The Menshevik and recallist currents in Russian social democracy were without doubt the "definite departures" Lenin had in mind.

As well as Germany, Lenin paid special attention to the course of the workers' movement in Britain. The conferences in 1911of the two organizations that would eventually form the Labor Party were most instructive given the context: "It is well known that Britain and Germany have been arming very intensively during the past few years. Competition between these two countries in the world market is becoming increasingly acute. The danger of a military conflict is approaching more and more formidably." Even more important, the "socialists of Britain and Germany, and also of France (whom Britain would be particularly glad to drag into war in order to have a continental land army against Germany) are devoting much attention to the threatening war, fighting with might and main against bourgeois chauvinism and armaments, and doing all they can to explain to the most backward sections of the proletariat and of the petty bourgeoisie what misfortunes ensue from a war which serves exclusively the interests of the bourgeoisie."

The conference deliberations of the two organizations, the British Social-Democratic Party and the Independent Labor Party, revealed that while their leaders, respectively Henry Hyndman and Ramsey MacDonald, pursued "opportunist" policies—at one point "MacDonald said with virginal opportunist innocence that Parliament was hardly the place for 'propaganda speeches'"—it was "really gratifying" to learn that "from

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their ranks firm and determined voices were heard protesting against" opportunism. This was especially important at this moment since opportunism enabled in both cases, as he noted, "jingoism" and "chauvinism." In concluding, Lenin admitted that the "Liberals of all countries, Russia included, are rejoicing and laughing now at the sight of the predominance of opportunism in the British labor movement. But 'he laughs best who laughs last.'"[72] Again, history would decide whether his judgment was warranted. What he pointed to, however—the links between opportunism and the war drive and how revolutionary social democracy should respond—proved, as will be seen, to be prescient.

The End of the Third Duma and "Constitutional Illusions"

Once the election results for the Third Duma were in, Lenin concluded that it would be "*incapable of accomplishing the objective tasks of the revolution even in the most distorted form*. It cannot even partly heal the gaping wounds inflicted upon Russia by the old regime—it can only cover up those wounds with wretched, sour, fictitious reforms. The election results only confirm our firm belief that *Russia cannot emerge from her present crisis in a peaceful way.*" If that wasn't clear before, the "constitutional crisis" in the spring of 1911 removed all doubts. Stolypin's habit of riding roughshod over the Duma eventually led the Octobrists and Cadets—at least their leaderships—to break with him in May. He needed both wings of the bourgeoisie to carry out his main project of converting the autocracy into a bourgeois monarchy, and the Third Duma was to be the vehicle for doing so. But as Lenin explained, "Tsarism consulted the bourgeoisie when the revolution still seemed to be a force; but it gradually applied its jackboot to kick out *all* the leaders of the bourgeoisie . . . as soon as the revolutionary pressure from below slackened." As the regime's leading landlord, Nicholas had no material interest in providing a real solution to the most "gaping" of the "wounds inflicted upon Russia"—land inequality. And as long as the Left and Right bourgeoisie continued to be afflicted with "parliamentary cretinism," it could never conceive of the crisis being solved in the only way it could—outside the parliamentary arena and in the streets. "Stolypin's policy," Lenin concluded, "ended in failure."[73] His assassination by a Socialist Revolutionary in September 1911 was indeed the final nail in the coffin.

The frustrations of the Octobrists and Cadets and their eventual break with Stolypin in May had been salutary, Lenin contended: "[T]hey express, once more, the collapse of constitutional illusions—which is a

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useful by-product of the 'constitutional' crisis."[74] He then put Stolypin's tenure and assassination in broad context:

> Stolypin disappeared from the scene at the very moment when the Black-Hundred monarchy had taken everything that could be of use to it from the counter-revolutionary sentiments of the whole Russian bourgeoisie. Now this bourgeoisie—repudiated, humiliated, and disgraced by its own renunciation of democracy, the struggle of the masses and revolution—stands perplexed and bewildered, seeing the symptoms of a gathering new revolution. Stolypin helped the Russian people to learn a useful lesson: either march to freedom by overthrowing the tsarist monarchy, under the leadership of the proletariat; or sink deeper into slavery and submit to the Purishkeviches, Markovs and Tolmachovs [Black Hundred leaders], under the ideological and political leadership of the Milyukovs and Guchkovs [respectively Cadet and Octobrist leaders].[75]

With Stolypin gone, the final year of the Third Duma was comparatively uneventful. The Black Hundreds predominated and thus increasingly played the nationalist and chauvinist cards. Lenin continued to pay attention to and to work closely with the Duma fraction. When famine, for example, returned, he made suggestions to the party on how the fraction should be utilized to help combat it. Also, he helped them draft an alternative to the government's so-called Workers' State Insurance bill. In the process he noticed a speech that a fraction member, Kuznetsov, had given on the bill. While it "must be said, in fairness to him, that, in general, he spoke very well," he nevertheless made a mistake by echoing the Cadet call for electoral reform. But real reform required the existence of a republic and that demand, absent in the Cadet formulation, should have been included in his speech. After sketching out what "Kuznetsov should have said," Lenin offered some general advice:

> Wherever a Social-Democrat makes a political speech, it is his duty always to speak of a republic. But one must know how to speak of a republic. One cannot speak about it in the same terms when addressing a meeting in a factory and one in a Cossack village, when speaking at a meeting of students or in a peasant cottage, when it is dealt with from the rostrum of the Third Duma or in the columns of a publication issued abroad. The art of any propagandist and agitator consists in his ability to find the best means of influencing any given audience, by presenting a definite truth, in such a way as to make it most convincing, most easy to digest, most graphic, and most strongly impressive.[76]

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Last, when evidence was revealed in Duma deliberations in October 1911 of how the 55 social democratic deputies in the Second Duma had been illegally framed up, he urged a step up in the international campaign to free them that involved the Third Duma fraction and other party organizations.

In the last months of the Third Duma, an incident occurred that for Lenin was a teachable moment. A fraction member, Terenty Belousov, abruptly withdrew from the group but wanted to keep his seat in the Duma. The fraction unanimously voted that he resign from the Duma "since he was elected by the votes of Social Democrats and had been a member of the Social Democratic group in the Duma for four and a half years." Lenin agreed and advised that there was a larger issue at stake—the accountability of those elected by the working class to the working class. By wanting to stay in the Duma, Belousov betrayed a tendency in the parliamentary process of those who "grab mandates for personal gain." "This has been the case in all bourgeois parliaments, and everywhere the workers who are aware of their historic role are fighting these practices and, *in the process of the struggle*, are training their own working-class members of parliament, men who are not out for mandates, not out to profit by parliamentary manipulations, but are the trusted envoys of the working class."[77] And this was advice given even before Lenin learned that a group of capitalists in Belousov's constituency came to his defense and urged that he remain in the Duma.

***

Six months before the Third Duma formally came to a close, June 9, 1912, a Bolshevik leadership meeting took place in Prague, in part to make plans for the elections to the Fourth Duma. Along the way it adopted a resolution written by Lenin on the conduct of the fraction in the Third Duma:

> This Conference recognizes that the Social-Democratic group in the Duma made use of the Duma platform in accordance with the line defined by the December (1908) Party Conference [Paris], which must remain the guide for the direction of Party work in the Duma.
>
> The Conference, in particular, regards as consistent with the tasks of the proletariat that aspect of the group's activities that it has energetically defended the interests of the workers and all measures for improving their lot (for instance, the labor bills) and in so doing has endeavored to show all the partial tasks in their relation to the general aims of the liberation movement led by the proletariat, and points to the mass movement as the only way to rid Russia of the sufferings and shame to which she has been brought by tsarism.[78]

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Chapter 2

"To Prepare for a New Russian Revolution"

The Fourth Duma

By the beginning of 1911, Lenin concluded that the worst of the counterrevolution was over and that there were signs of a "revival." The main task was to rebuild the decimated party, especially since there were influential voices who contended that an illegal organization wasn't necessary—the "liquidators." And no better opportunity, he argued, existed for doing that than the upcoming elections to the new Duma. In addition to party building, the elections birthed a new social democratic Duma group. Though slightly smaller than the previous, it proved to be a politically stronger fraction. Almost half, all Bolsheviks, were elected by industrial workers—an advance for Russian social democracy. If the five-year-long Third Duma was about the Russian party finding its parliamentary feet, the briefer Fourth was about putting that prior training into practice. From its convening in November 1912 to the onset of the First World War in August 1914, the Bolshevik wing of the party, under Lenin's direction, accomplished more in the parliamentary arena in as short a time as any revolutionaries had ever done and, probably, ever since—and with more to come.

Lenin in Campaign Mode

More than a year before the elections for the new Duma took place, and while the Third was in its last session, Lenin began campaigning. That meant drawing up a program and strategy for the elections while opposing the liquidators and the remaining recallists. Clarity on the differences, as always for Lenin, was of utmost importance, and at issue was one that went to the very heart of Marxism as he understood it—the

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distinction between democracy and liberalism. To give his perspective authority required a party discussion, debate, and vote. The challenge then was to implement those decisions, which took on a new urgency when it became evident in the spring of 1912 that the Russian Revolution was reawakening. Lenin the strategist, organizer, and taskmaster were all on full display.

"The Irreconcilable Difference": A "Liberal Labor" versus a Marxist Labor Policy

"The elections to the Fourth Duma are due to be held next year. The Social-Democratic Party must launch its election campaign at *once*."[1] Thus began Lenin's first detailed campaign literature written in October 1911. Two months later in a clear warning to the recallists, he wrote, "[A]ny wavering as to the advisability, from the point of view of Marxism, of our participation in the elections, is impermissible."[2]

Launching the campaign was a necessity given that "we are at the beginning of a new phase of the counterrevolution." The student protests the previous year, peasant discontent bred by the famine, and "last but not least, the strike wave" opened up space for "intensified propaganda, agitation, and organization . . . and the forthcoming elections provide a natural, inevitable, topical 'pretext' for such work." To do so required rebuilding the decimated party from the bottom up. "Therefore the first task of all Social-Democrats is to take the initiative in organizing nuclei (a word excellently expressing the idea that the objective conditions call for the formation of small, very flexible groups, circles, and organizations); it is the task of *all* Social-Democrats, even where there are only two or three of them, to gain some 'foothold,' establish connections of one kind or another, and start work that is systematic even if very modest."

A campaign, especially a social democratic one, needed a platform—what Lenin sketched out in the first of a series of strategic and tactical writings that became the basis for the Bolsheviks' plan of action. But as he pointedly observed, to "every party at all worthy of the name a platform is something that has existed long before the elections; it is not something specially devised 'for the elections,' but an inevitable result of the whole *work* of the party, of the way the work is organized, and of its whole trend in the given historical period." In other words, exactly because of what Lenin had been doing for more than a decade could he hit the ground running when new opportunities arose. That legacy, when combined with the reality of "the current political situation," determined the key planks in the platform: "Very often it may be useful, and sometimes even essential,

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to give the election platform of Social-Democracy a finishing touch by adding a brief general slogan, a watchword for the elections, stating the most cardinal issues of current political practice, and providing a most convenient and most immediate pretext, as well as subject matter, for comprehensive socialist propaganda. In our epoch only the following three points can make up this watchword, this general slogan: (1) a republic; (2) confiscation of all landed estates, and (3) the eight-hour day." After spelling out the rational for the three demands, especially "a republic," he distilled their significance: "[T]he substance and mainspring of the Social-Democratic election platform can be expressed in three words; *for the revolution!*" Regarding the possible charge that calling for "a republic," an illegality in Romanov Russia, might suggest "that recognition of the importance and necessity of legal work is not seriously intended," Lenin responded constructively and pedagogically:

> We cannot legally advocate a republic (except from the rostrum of the Duma, from which republican propaganda can and should be carried on *fully* within the bounds of legality); but we can write and speak in defense of democracy *in such a way* that we do not in the least condone ideas about the compatibility of democracy with the monarchy; *in such a way* as to refute and ridicule the liberal and Narodnik monarchists; *in such a way* as to make sure that the readers and the audiences form a clear idea of the connection between the monarchy, precisely as a monarchy, and the despotism and arbitrary rule reigning in Russia.[3]

As the events of 1917 would show, the practice of "adding a brief general slogan, a watchword" to a platform would prove to be most effective for the Bolsheviks.

Lenin's demand for a republic is exactly what Engels found wanting in the draft program of the German party in 1891, the so-called Erfurt Program. Not including it, he charged, smacked of "opportunism"—"this sacrifice of the future of the movement for its present . . . which is gaining ground in a large section of the Social-Democratic press"—and dangerously suggested that not only a "republic, but also communist society, can be established in a cozy, peaceful way." If the Wilhelmian state prohibited its inclusion, then wording should be found, as Lenin did, to at least express its substance.[4] Note also Engels's suggestion about how the program should be written: "the short, precise phrase, once understood, takes root in the memory, and becomes a slogan"—advice that no doubt informed Lenin's "finishing touch" to his draft platform.[5]

The Bolshevik leader wasn't the only social democrat who drafted an election platform. The liquidators and their Menshevik sympathizers

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were doing the same. After reading an early edition of their platform and despite Martov's efforts to put the best social democratic face on it, Lenin told *Sotsial-Demokrat* readers, "There should be no illusions—we have *two* election platforms, that is a fact . . . [That of Martov et al.] which *claims to be Social-Democratic* is actually *the platform of a liberal labor policy*. Anyone who fails to understand the difference, the irreconcilable difference, between these *two* platforms of working-class policy cannot conduct the election campaign *intelligently*. He is sure to be haunted at every step by disappointments, 'misunderstandings,' and comic or tragic mistakes."

To understand Lenin's critique requires a bit of history. For about three years the liquidators, mainly in response to the blows Stolypin inflicted on the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) and other opponents of the regime, had been arguing that an underground party was not only impossible but not necessary. Rather, the effort should be made to carve out legal space for Russian social democracy. As Martov put it, Lenin quoting him, "'The workers' party should strive . . . to prevail upon the propertied classes to take one step or another toward the democratization of legislation and an extension of constitutional guarantees.'" But that was exactly the problem, Lenin countered: "Every liberal concedes that it is quite legitimate for the workers to strive 'to prevail upon *the propertied classes*' to take one step or another; all that the liberal stipulates is that the workers should not dare to prevail upon *the non-propertied* to take 'steps' which are *not* to the liberals' *liking*. The entire policy of the British liberals, who have so profoundly corrupted the British workers, is to allow the workers to try 'to prevail upon the propertied classes,' but *not to allow the workers* to win for themselves the leadership of a movement of the whole people." Not for the first or last time would Lenin read electoral/parliamentary developments in Russia through the lens of what was taking place in Western Europe—evidence, again, for one of the central arguments of this book.

Carving out only political space for the proletariat and its party became the core of the liquidators' election platform and the tactical measures thus implied; hence "the irreconcilable difference" with what Lenin was proposing. In a subsequent and more detailed response, Lenin quoted Martov again: "We must conduct the entire election campaign under the banner of the struggle of the proletariat for the freedom of its political self-determination, of the struggle for its right to have a class party of its own and to develop its activities freely, for the right to take part in political life as an independent organized force. This principle [mark this!] must govern both the content and tactics of the election campaign

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and the methods to be used for organizational work." Lenin gladly reproduced Martov's "principle" because it "correctly" expressed "the crux of the matter . . . a liberal labor policy"—what made it so different from a "Marxist labor policy."

> The liberal bourgeois tells the workers: you are justified in fighting, indeed, you must fight, for the freedom of *your own* political self-determination, for the right to have a class party of *your own*, for the right freely to develop your activities, for *the right to take part* in political life as an independent organized force. It is these principles of the liberal, educated, radical, to use the English or French term, bourgeoisie that Martov is offering the workers in the guise of Marxism.
>
> The Marxist tells the workers: in order really and successfully to fight for the freedom of your "own" political self-determination, you must fight for the free political self-determination of the entire people, you must show the people what the successive democratic forms of its political existence should be, and win the masses and the undeveloped sections of the working people away from the influence of the liberals. If your party is really to attain a full understanding of the tasks of the class, and if its activity is actually to be of a class nature and not of a guild nature, it is necessary for it not only to take part in political life, but, in spite of all the vacillations of the liberals, to direct the political life and initiative of the broad strata on to a greater arena than that indicated by the liberals, toward more substantial and more radical aims. He who confines the class to an "independent" corner of "activity" in an arena, the bounds, form, and shape of which are determined or permitted by the liberals, does not understand the tasks of the class. Only he understands the tasks of the class who directs its attention (and consciousness, and practical activity, etc.) to the need for so reconstructing this very arena, its entire form, its entire shape, as to extend it beyond the limits allowed by the liberals.

The differences were indeed "irreconcilable," because what Martov and the liquidators were proposing, in Lenin's view, negated the very essence of Marxist politics. Their line "*excludes* the idea of the 'hegemony' of the working class, whereas the second deliberately defines this very idea."[6] Therefore an election platform, a real one that bridged these differences, was a virtual impossibility. Russian social democracy went into the elections, hence, with two opposed lines—in Lenin's terms, democracy versus liberalism.

Once the Cadets mapped out their campaign strategy, Lenin could be even more concrete: "It is one of our most important tasks in the Third Duma [still in session] in general, after the period 1906–11 in particular, and especially on the eve of the elections to the Fourth Duma, to explain the profound difference between genuine democracy

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and the liberalism of the Cadets (the liberalism of 'society') who take the name of democracy in vain"—a thread that ran through almost all his interventions leading up to the elections.[7] This obligation applied not just to the Cadets, because "for Marxists, the main task in the election campaign is to *explain* to the people the *nature* of the various political parties, *what* views are advocated and *who* advocates them, what are the real and vital interests behind each party, which *classes* of society shelter behind each party label."[8]

As for the nuts and bolts of the campaign, of prime importance, understandably, would be the elections in the workers' curiae. If the elections to the Third Duma had been about getting as many workers' deputies as possible to be social democrats, this time it was making sure they would be supporters of a Marxist rather than a liberal labor policy. The guarantee for such an outcome depended, as had been the case before, on concerted propaganda work at the factory level where the electors were selected. As for the other curiae, specifically the second or the petit bourgeois urban curiae, the Left bloc tactic was still operative. With concrete examples from various locations, Lenin showed how social democrats could have won more seats to the Third Duma had more thought gone into the calculus of forming tactical blocs at the second stage of the elections with the Trudoviks to keep out the Cadets and with the Cadets to keep out the Rights. The Mensheviks, it may be remembered, opposed the Left bloc tactic for the Third Duma elections because it prevented them from blocking with the Cadets at the first stage of the elections. In league with the liquidators this time they'd do the same, because their liberal labor policy depended on support from the Cadets.

By now not only Lenin's familiar attention to detail was on display but also his facility with the "intricate mechanism" of the cumbersome and undemocratic election laws. To get a flavor, consider his advice about what the workers' and Trudovik electors should do at the provincial assemblies if they couldn't immediately form blocs with liberals to defeat the Rights:

> [T]he tactics of the democrats should be to unite first with the liberals to defeat the Rights, and then *with the Rights to defeat the liberals*, so that neither are able to secure the election of their candidates (provided that neither the Rights nor the liberals command an absolute majority by themselves, for if they do the democrats cannot hope to get into the Duma). In accordance with Article 119 of the Regulations governing the elections, the assembly adjourns. Then the democrats, guided by the exact figures of the votes cast, form a bloc with the liberals, demanding a proportionate share of the seats. *In such cases it is essential that the liberals elect the democrat first and not the other way round*, for history and the entire experience of

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> Europe show that the liberals have often cheated the democrats, whereas the democrats have never cheated the liberals.

Consistent with the importance he lent to the worker-peasant alliance, Lenin also provided detailed advice on how social democrats could assist the Trudoviks to win more seats:

> The duty of the working-class democrats with regard to the peasants in the elections is perfectly clear. They must carry their purely class propaganda to a peasantry that is becoming proletarianized. They must help the peasants to unite their forces in the elections to enable them, even on the basis of the June Third electoral law, to send to the Fourth Duma their *own* representatives in as large numbers as possible despite the obstacles put in their way both by the supporters of the old regime and by the liberals. They must strive to consolidate the leadership of working-class democrats and explain the great harm caused by the vacillation of the peasant democrats toward the liberals.[9]

The task now was to have a collective discussion and vote on Lenin's proposals in order to put them into force.

The Prague Conference

For the Third Duma elections, the RSDLP had been relatively united. The London or Fifth Party Congress in 1907 approved a set of resolutions to guide the party for conducting the elections and directing the Duma group. The Central Committee that was elected with a slight Bolshevik majority ceased, in fact, after a year or so to function. The unresolved Bolshevik/Menshevik divide was the main reason. To this schism was added the differences with the recallists and ultimatumists and then later and more significant, the liquidators. The Paris conference in December 1908 proved to be last authoritative party meeting before Lenin and the Bolsheviks took the initiative to hold a new one—this time in Prague in January 1912. As the resolution on the "Constitution of the Conference" explained, the "extremely urgent practical tasks of the working-class movement and of the revolutionary struggle against tsarism (leadership in the economic struggle, general political agitation, proletarian meetings, the campaign in connection with the elections to the Fourth Duma, etc.) make it imperative that prompt and most energetic measures be taken to re-establish a competent practical Party center, closely linked with the local organizations." The upcoming elections, in other words, in combination with the new upsurge, required such a meeting.

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"Despite a number of arrests made by the police, all the Party organizations functioning in Russia, with very few exceptions, are represented at the present Conference," the resolution reported. They came from "St. Petersburg, Moscow, Saratov, Kazan, Samara, Nizhni-Novgorod, Sormovo, Rostov, Ekaterinoslav, Kiev, Nikolayev, Lugansk, Baku, the Tiflis group, the Wilno group, the Dvinsk group, Ekaterinburg, Ufa, Tyumen, a number of places in the Central Region, and others." As Krupskaya described it, the "Prague Conference was the first Party conference with workers from Russia that we succeeded in calling after 1908."[10] Two Duma fraction members also attended. The call came from the Bolshevik-led Russian Organizing Commission, "which several months ago notified all Social-Democrats of its convocation and invited to the Conference all, without a single exception, organizations of our Party; furthermore, all organizations were given an opportunity to take part in the Conference." Nevertheless it was mainly a Bolshevik affair with only two Mensheviks participating and no liquidators. While Mensheviks were more sympathetic to the line of the liquidators, there were important exceptions—such as Plekhanov and, especially, most of the Mensheviks in the Duma fraction—and they came to be known as pro-Party Mensheviks. The resolution noted that "Bolsheviks and pro-Party Mensheviks in Russia worked in harmony" on the Organizing Commission. Also, the meeting was mainly a Russian affair, since none of the national parties such as the Poles, Lithuanians, or the Bund attended, despite having been "invited three times" and that "every facility has been provided for them to send their delegates."[11]

Party tasks and the upcoming elections specifically were the key agenda items at the three week meeting. "The main tasks of our Party in the elections, and equally of the future Social-Democratic group in the Duma itself—a task to which all else must be subordinated—is socialist, class propaganda and the organization of the working class." The strategy and tactics Lenin detailed in prior writings were distilled into a four-page resolution, "Elections to the Fourth Duma" (see Appendix D), the campaign's blueprint, adopted unanimously by the conference. It reaffirmed the all-important tactic of no blocs with other parties, including the liquidators in the workers' curiae elections. Also, the Left-bloc tactic was permissible only in the second stage of elections in the peasant and second urban curiae, "to conclude agreements with bourgeois democrats against the liberals, and then with the liberals against all the government parties." But as agreed to at the London Congress, there was a crucial proviso: "There can be no electoral agreements providing for a common platform, and Social-Democratic candidates must not be bound by any

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kind of political commitment, nor must Social-Democrats be prevented from resolutely criticizing the counter-revolutionary nature of the liberals and the half-heartedness and inconsistency of the bourgeois democrats."[12]

Combined with the other resolutions—especially "The Social-Democratic Group in the Duma" and "The Character and Organizational Forms of Party Work"—there is no better set of documents to understand how the Bolsheviks went into and conducted themselves in the election campaign. The former, for example, emphasized how the Duma fraction could use its remaining time in the Third Duma to promote the three slogans of the campaign for the Fourth Duma. The "Party Work" resolution spelled out "the use of the Duma speeches of the S.D. members, the training of workers to become legal lecturers, the creation (in connection with the elections to the Fourth Duma) of workers' and other voters' committees for each district, each street, etc., and the organization of Social-Democratic campaigns in connection with the elections to municipal bodies, etc."[13] Missing in the official account of the Conference—probably for security reasons—was a decision or discussion, if not a resolution, to launch a legal daily, *Pravda* [*Truth*], as it would be called.[14] Its role was indispensable to the campaign, as will be seen. A hint was alluded to in the point in the "Elections" resolution about the need to "pay the necessary attention to the strengthening and broadening of the legally existing workers' press."

The conference declared itself to be the highest body for the party until the next congress and elected a new Central Committee, which included in addition to Lenin future Bolshevik leaders like Lev Kamenev and Grigory Zinoviev; Stalin was later co-opted to it. As for the liquidators' group, the "Conference declares that by its conduct . . . [it] *has definitely placed itself outside the Party*."[15] Prague launched not only the Bolshevik election campaign for the Fourth Duma but in hindsight the Bolshevik party itself. There was a fly, however, in the ointment. Unbeknownst to Lenin and other Bolsheviks, one of the newly elected Central Committee members was an agent of Russian state security, or Okhrana—Roman Malinovsky—the implications of which would become apparent only later.

With the authority of Prague behind him, Lenin moved quickly to write the first official campaign literature for mass distribution: "The Election Platform of the RSDLP" (see Appendix E). Addressed to "Worker comrades, and all citizens of Russia . . . each and every one of you who enjoy electoral rights, as well as the great majority deprived of rights," it began with an indictment of the regime for its unprecedented counterrevolutionary terror both domestically and abroad: "[It] tries to

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suppress all movements for freedom in Turkey, Persia, and China." After a popular and pedagogical presentation of the campaign's three slogans and explanation of the differences between the "three main parties . . . contesting the elections: (1) the Black Hundreds, (2) the liberals, and (3) the Social-Democrats," Lenin made clear what the latter hoped to get out of the elections:

> Our Party goes into the Duma, not in order to play at "reforms," not in order to "defend the Constitution," "convince" the Octobrists or "to dislodge reaction" from the Duma, as the liberals who are deceiving the people say they will, but in order to call the masses to the struggle from the Duma rostrum, to explain the teachings of socialism, to expose every government and liberal deception, to expose the monarchist prejudices of the backward sections of the people, and the class roots of the bourgeois parties,—in other words in order to prepare an army of class-conscious fighters for a new Russian revolution.

Lenin later said that missing in the platform was "a very important paragraph about socialism."[16] That would be rectified in future campaign literature. The immediate task was to make sure the platform was widely distributed. According to the editors of the *Lenin Collected Works*, it was published "as a separate leaflet and distributed in 18 localities including the main working-class centers. Reprinted from the leaflet, it appeared as a supplement to No. 26 of *Sotsial-Demokrat*. It was also reprinted by many local Bolshevik organizations and by the Russian Bureau of the C.C. of the R.S.D.L.P. in Tiflis."[17]

Regarding Lenin's point about preparing "for a new Russian revolution," it is noteworthy what the platform said about the demand for a republic:

> Time was, and not so long ago, when the slogan "Down with the autocracy" seemed too advanced for Russia. Nevertheless, the R.S.D.L. Party issued this slogan, the advanced workers caught it up and spread it throughout the country; and in two or three years this slogan became a popular saying. To work then, worker comrades and all citizens of Russia, all those who do not want to see our country sink finally into stagnation, barbarity, lack of rights and the appalling poverty of tens of millions. The Russian Social-Democrats, the Russian workers will succeed in making "Down with the tsarist monarchy, long live the Russian Democratic Republic!" a nation-wide slogan.

This is significant. If Lenin was correct—and there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of his claim—then it was Russian social democracy, with

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him leading the way, that planted on a mass scale the idea of overthrowing the three-hundred-year-old Romanov dynasty and replacing it with a democratic republic. A credible case can then be made that the February Revolution in 1917 in which Nicholas was dethroned had its origins in the Bolshevik campaign for the Fourth Duma—key evidence for one of the claims of this book that Bolshevik success in the October Revolution can be traced to Lenin's electoral strategy.

The "Revolutionary Upswing" and *Pravda*

On April 4 about five hundred striking workers in the gold fields of Lena in Siberia were brutally killed or wounded by the regime's armed forces. When a social democrat deputy in the Duma demanded an explanation, the government's minister of the interior infamously replied, "So it was and so it will be!" Outrage and protests erupted throughout Russia and gave the already planned May Day demonstrations additional energy—the largest political protests since 1905. Both developments underscored, Lenin insisted, the importance of the elections to the Fourth Duma: "This thickening of the revolutionary atmosphere casts a vivid light on the tasks of the Party and its role in the election campaign . . . Russia has entered a period of revolutionary upswing."[18]

At the Prague Conference, as already noted, the decision was made to launch a legal RSDLP daily newspaper.[19] Shortly thereafter Lenin met with two members of the Duma fraction in Leipzig to map out plans. The original idea was to convert *Zvezda* [*The Star*], a weekly, into a daily. But that would not be easy, as Lenin's comment to Gorky suggested: "I am very, very glad that you are helping *Zvezda*. We are having a devilish hard job with it—internal and external and financial difficulties are immense."[20] Though sometimes described as a "Bolshevik" or "semi-Bolshevik" paper, *Zvezda* more accurately was a collaborative venture between Lenin, the St. Petersburg Central Committee, and members of the Duma fraction. Because of parliamentary immunity, deputies could serve as publishers of papers and not fear arrest as so often happened with opposition publications; a Bolshevik Duma member, Nikolai Poletayev, served as *Zvezda*'s publisher. But the rest of the fraction—again, predominantly Menshevik—also had close ties to the paper. A comment Lenin made to a fellow Bolshevik about them in relation to the decision of the Prague Conference to break with the liquidators is telling: "The Duma Social-Democratic group is *directly* neither for us nor for them. But (1) there were *two* deputies at our Conference; (2) *Zvezda* has *nine* Social-Democratic deputies on its list of contributors, while the

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liquidationist *Zhivoye Dyelo* [*Vital Cause*, a short-lived legal daily] has *four*."[21] A few months later he remarked that the liquidationists "hate the [Duma] group . . . Why? Because the majority of the group, in which pro-Party Mensheviks have always predominated, have always fought with determination against the liquidators and helped to make them quite harmless in St. Petersburg."[22]

The "neither for us nor for them" character of the Duma group probably explains the friction between Lenin and the editorial board—"internal . . . difficulties," as he told Gorky—especially in the aftermath of Prague when new battle lines were drawn. The board members, all Bolsheviks, were reluctant, I suspect, to do as Lenin wanted and give unequivocal support to the antiliquidationist decisions taken at Prague—for fear of alienating many of the pro-Party but "neither for us nor them" Mensheviks in the fraction with whom they had collaborated on *Zvezda*. Whatever the case, it wasn't the first or last time that Lenin, from "afar," and his comrades in St. Petersburg weren't all on the same political page.

The first clear indication of problems was his very pointed letter to the board accompanying his just sent "Election Platform": "This platform is being sent only for the *information of all*, particularly the *compilers* of platforms. It is time to *cease writing* platforms when there already *exists* one confirmed and published by the Central Committee . . . I would *very strongly* advise the editors, known to you, *not* to approve *any* platform. For the platform to be confirmed by anyone except the C.C. is a liquidationist trick. Besides, in essence, no good will be done by the editors approving a platform. Let the editors agree with the existing platform or remain silent." Revealed here was what Lenin correctly perceived six months earlier—a struggle within Russian social democracy over which election platform, a liberal labor or a Marxist labor policy, would be promoted. The specific issue on display was whether a party paper would defend the platform approved by the Central Committee elected by the Prague Conference (see Appendix E). Given the aforementioned nexus between the Duma fraction and the editorial board, there were bound to be disagreements—especially, again, in the aftermath of Prague. Added to the mix was the police factor. One of the fraction members, Vasily Shurkanov, who attended the Leipzig meeting where plans were made for a legal daily, was later discovered to have been an Okhrana agent—as well as the yet to be discussed Malinovsky, who was also there.[23]

The May Day demonstrations testified, in Lenin's opinion, to the contest between the contending platforms and what was at stake. Lenin was thoroughly heartened by the leaflet issued by the organizers in St. Petersburg—"underground nuclei" that had to fill in and take initiatives

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for the "shattered" St. Petersburg RSDLP Committee: "As a result of the arrests, there happens to be no hierarchic body able to decree the advancing of particular slogans. Hence the proletarian masses, the worker Social-Democrats and even some of the Socialist-Revolutionaries can be united *only* by slogans that are really indisputable for the masses, only by slogans that derive their strength not from a 'decree from above' (as demagogues and liquidators put it), but from the *conviction* of the revolutionary workers themselves. And," Lenin gleefully asked, "what do we find? . . . 'Let our slogans be,' the St. Petersburg workers wrote in their leaflet, 'a constituent assembly, an eight-hour working day, the confiscation of the landed estates.' And further on the leaflet launches the call: 'Down with the tsarist government! Down with the autocratic Constitution of June 3! Long live the democratic republic! Long live socialism!'" Not only was there an underground capable of organizing even in the absence of a "hierarchic body," but "*the slogans [it] adopted were those of the All-Russian Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. which was convened in January 1912*"—both outcomes diametrically opposed to the line of the liquidationists. The May Day protests, Lenin contended, showed that the slogans adopted by the Prague Conference were the real route to working-class unity, whereas the slogan Trotsky and the liquidators advocated, "freedom of association . . . a liberal labor policy," was "disregarded" by "the movement."

> The Social-Democratic proletariat of St. Petersburg has realized that a new revolutionary struggle must be started, not for the sake of one right, even though it should be the most essential, the most important for the working class, but for the sake of *the freedom of the whole people*.
>
> The Social-Democratic proletariat of St. Petersburg has realized that it must generalize its demands, and not break them up into parts, that the republic includes freedom of association, and not vice versa, that it is necessary to strike at the center, to attack the source of evil, to destroy the whole system, the whole regime, of the Russia of the tsar and the Black Hundreds.[24]

May Day might have also offered lessons to the proponents of the liberal labor policy. If the Bolshevik slogans were more popular with Russia's proletariat, their candidates would likely gain more seats in the new Duma. This may explain comments Martov made in a liquidationist publication shortly afterward. "Martov," according to Lenin, "threatens in advance the future Social-Democratic group in the Fourth Duma that if it turns out to be anti-liquidationist like its crafty predecessor, then 'cases like the Belousov affair will not be exceptions, but the rule,' meaning, in plain language, that the liquidators will *split* the Duma group. Your bark,

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liquidator gentlemen, is worse than your bite. Had you had the strength to do so, you would long ago have formed your own liquidationist group in the Duma."[25] Belousov, as noted in Chapter 1, abruptly withdrew from the Duma fraction toward the end of the last Third Duma session and joined the liquidator's camp. If Lenin was right about what the liquidators were unable to do in the Third Duma, he would be wrong when it came to the Fourth.

With increasingly taut battle lines leading up to the elections, the need for a legal daily was all the more necessary—but a paper in which Lenin and the editors could be on the same political page. For that he would have to wage a struggle. Getting the *Zvezda* editors on board with the election campaign was the immediate task. To that end he worked with them to put out a *Voter's Handbook*, which included some of his earlier articles in *Zvezda* on electoral strategy and tactics, to aid in the campaign work. When they were slow in getting a copy back to him, he complained, "We received the *Voter's Handbook two and a half weeks after publication!* Yet to send it at once would have cost *5 kopeks*."[26] Other party institutions also learned about Lenin the task master. To the Central Committee, about his platform along with a list of other complaints, he wrote, "No precise reply in writing about the platform either. Will it be published? When? Has it been approved completely? We have to print it in the Central Organ [*Sotsial-Demokrat*], but have no precise information."[27]

Lenin also began to be anxious about the status of the daily: "Let us know as soon as possible about the daily paper. What will be the size? What length of article can be sent?" Unbeknownst to Lenin—testimony to the shaky relations he had with the editorial board—the date of his inquiry, April 22, is when the first issue of *Pravda* [*Truth*] appeared. For complicated legal reasons, *Zvezda* had to cease operations on that date and the new paper became the legal daily envisioned at the Prague Conference.[28] The extant regular correspondence with the editorial board began a couple of weeks later when Lenin's first articles appeared. By July it was clear that Lenin saw the daily as an organizer for the upcoming elections:

> I would very much advise you to send a reporter to the City Council, find out *how many* applications [to register to vote] they are getting from tenants and set about publishing this *systematically* (encouraging successful districts and appealing to the unsuccessful). Very little time is left, and the paper should make itself responsible for the *whole* business.
>
> You should get from the City Council, through any statisticians among your acquaintances (or officially from the editors and the members of the State Duma), *all* the statistical material (if they don't exist, then buy *Rech*

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> [*Speech*, the Cadet daily] for those years and months, or some other paper) about the elections to the *First, Second* and Third State Duma + Petersburg statistics (housing, population, etc.). With such material in your hands, and with an intelligent reporter visiting the City Council daily or 2–3 times a week, you can run a *good* section in the paper about the course of the elections.[29]

The biggest challenge Lenin faced with the editorial board of *Pravda* was how they should deal with him and the liquidators—the "neither for us nor for them" problem. Lenin, of course, wanted to take them on in the pages of the new daily. The editors, again, due possibly to their ties with the pro-Party Mensheviks, were hesitant—the reason they didn't publish every article he submitted. "There is not," he contended, "and cannot be any middle course."[30]

> By avoiding "painful questions," [*Nevskaya*] *Zvezda* and *Pravda make themselves* dry and monotonous, uninteresting, uncombative organs. A socialist paper *must* carry on polemics: our times are times of desperate confusion, and we can't do without polemics . . . You can't hide differences from the workers (as *Pravda* is doing): it's harmful, fatal, ridiculous . . . *Pravda* will *perish* if it is *only* a "popular," "positive" organ, that is certain . . .
>
> It would certainly be victorious if it were not afraid of polemics, talked straight about the liquidators, became lively through argument . . . A paper must be a step *ahead of everyone*, and that goes for both *Nevskaya Zvezda* and for *Pravda*. Side by side with the two "positive" little articles, *Pravda* must provide *polemics* . . .—a feature article ridiculing the liquidators—and so forth. Monotony and lateness are incompatible with the newspaper business. And *Pravda* has in addition a special and exceptionally important duty: "whom is it going to *lead*"—this is what *everyone* is asking, what *everyone* is trying to read between the lines.[31]

Stalin, whom Lenin sent to collaborate directly with the editors in order to make his case, also, to Lenin's ire, succumbed to the Rodney King "Why can't we all get along?" syndrome.[32] Conciliationists, Lenin learned, came in all stripes, including those of Bolsheviks.

Toward the Elections

"[T]he elections are quite near at hand—a mere seven to nine weeks. We must take steps to redouble our effort with regard to all aspects of our pre-election work." Lenin's article, "The Significance of the St. Petersburg Elections," in the July 1 issue of *Nevskaya Zvezda* [*The Neva Star*] was a call to action to "worker democrats" in Russia's capital. St. Petersburg,

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he proposed, should be a "*model* of the election campaign which worker democrats have to undertake in the incredibly difficult conditions of Russian reality."

One thing that distinguished the capital is that "there is a tolerably well-organized working-class press, one which, for all the fierce persecution it is subjected to, for all the fines and the arrests of its editors, for all the instability of its position, and for all that it is kept down by the censorship, is able to reflect, to some little degree, the views of worker democrats . . . Nowhere else are the workers in a position to hold an election campaign *visible* to everyone." The latter qualification was significant because it testified, once again, to Lenin's larger vision—"free political self-determination of the entire people." Yes, the workers' curiae elections "are highly important, but there the workers cannot come up against the other classes of the population, and therefore cannot present on an *adequate* scale the *national* demands, and the views on the tasks involved in a *common policy*, which have been worked out by the progressive, proletarian democrats, so *that* they may serve all democrats in general as a guide."

What St. Petersburg offered, unlike any other setting, was a direct contest between "the liberals and the democrats," specifically in the elections in the urban second curiae. It was direct because the "electoral law now in force permits of a second ballot, so that no blocs are required, or permissible, at the first stage." That fact, coupled with the "absence of a Black Hundred danger," meant that "Russian Marxists" had a reasonable chance, given that the "elections to the Second Duma showed that Cadet 'domination' among the democratic urban voters is very far from being solid," in "freeing petty-bourgeois democrats from liberal influence." Hence the "election struggle in St. Petersburg is a struggle for hegemony between the liberals and the worker democrats within the whole of Russia's emancipation movement." Because of the nationwide significance of the elections, he urged that "[a]ll Russia should also help St. Petersburg."[33]

Having what no other city had—*Pravda*, with a daily press run of about 40,000, and, of lesser importance, *Nevskaya Zvezda*—was certainly a plus for the campaign, but there were limitations, aside from the conciliationist tendencies on the editorial board that Lenin had to struggle against. He suggested as much when referring to "censorship" and the "little degree" to which "the views of worker democrats" could be presented in the paper. More candid about the "legal *Marxist* press" in the illegal *Rabochaya Gazeta*, he wrote, "[I]t is fearfully handicapped, and does not dare utter a word about a republic, our Party, uprising, or the

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tsar's gang." At least, though, it is the worker's "*own* press and defends Marxism *theoretically*."[34]

Lenin made a convincing case why *Pravda* indeed was the worker's "*own* press" in his longest contribution to date in the daily, "The Results of Six Months' Work." Published in mid-July in a series of articles, it analyzed monthly contributions to *Zvevda*, *Nevskaya Zveda*, and *Pravda* from 49 towns for six months. Five-hundred four groups made contributions. He then looked at comparable data for the two liquidator publications, *Zhivoye Dyelo* and *Nevsky Golos*, and reported, again with tables and figures (and glee), that "the group of liquidationist intellectuals succeeded in enlisting the support of *15 groups of workers in all*! . . . Could one imagine a more specific proof of the fact that we are in the presence of a group of liquidationist intellectuals who are capable of publishing a semi-liberal magazine and newspaper, but totally lack any serious support among the proletarian masses?"[35] The lesson, among others, was that factory workers could sustain and advance a working-class daily newspaper.

Sandwiched between the statistics was the import of the upcoming elections:

> [A] newspaper is required by the workers in general, and for carrying out elections to the Fourth Duma in particular. The workers know very well that they can expect no good either from the Third or from the Fourth Duma. But we must take part in the elections, firstly, to rally and politically enlighten the mass of the workers during the elections, when party struggles and the entire political life will be stimulated and when the *masses* will *learn politics* in one way or other; and, secondly, to get our worker deputies into the Duma. Even in the most reactionary Duma, in a purely landlord one, worker deputies *have done*, and can do, a great deal for the working-class cause, provided they are true worker democrats, provided they are connected with the masses and the masses learn to direct them and check on their activity.[36]

At the end of July, Lenin wrote in the illegal press, "Our Party has already made use of the elections, and very extensively too. No amount of 'interpretation' by the police, no amount of falsification of the Fourth Duma . . . can nullify *this* result. Propaganda, organized strictly on Party lines, has already been carried out everywhere and has *set the tone* for the entire election campaign of the Social-Democrats."[37]

If the legal press couldn't be overtly used to promote the election campaign, it could be a great venue for proletarian education—what Lenin meant when he said it "defends Marxism *theoretically*." From July through the elections in October and November, Lenin supplied numerous articles

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to *Pravda* inspired, probably, by a resolution passed at the Prague Conference on the party's press. It asked "that more space be devoted to articles of a propagandist nature, and that the articles be written in a more popular style, so as to make them more intelligible to the workers."[38]

Usually no more than a page—making them convenient for campaign leaflets—the articles covered a rich range of topics, and while they couldn't explicitly call for a vote for the candidates of the outlawed RSDLP, campaign supporters could fill in between the lines in discussions and meetings. There were, for example, a group of articles employing basic Marxist analysis to examine and explain current wage rates, working hours, and capitalist profits in Russia. These were complimented by articles that discussed the economic reality of peasants. Also, as the campaign got under way, Lenin responded to Cadet and Octobrist condemnation of the regime's manipulation of the electoral rules to get more priests from the rural areas elected. His disagreement with their objections was consistent with his electoral strategy: "A democrat is absolutely hostile to the slightest *falsification* of suffrage and elections, but he is absolutely *in favor* of the widest masses of any priesthood being directly and openly drawn into politics. Non-participation of the priest hood in the political struggle is the most harmful hypocrisy. In reality the priesthood has *always* participated in politics covertly, and the people would only benefit if it were to pass to overt politics."[39]

Most instructive for purposes here was an article that took on the pro-monarchist Black Hundred daily, *Novoye Vremya* [*New Times*]. In an article about the 1912 US presidential elections, the paper self-righteously deplored "'the power of money' in America, relating with malicious joy the facts about the monstrous venality of Taft, Roosevelt, Wilson and, indeed, *all* Presidential candidates put up by the bourgeois parties. Here is a free, democratic republic for you, hissed the venal Russian newspaper." Lenin rejected the self-serving spin of an autocratic cheerleader and countered with the ABC's of Marxism: "The class-conscious workers will reply to that calmly and proudly: we have no illusions about the significance of broad democracy. No democracy in the world can eliminate the class struggle and the omnipotence of money. It is not this that makes democracy important and useful. The importance of democracy is that it makes the class struggle broad, open and conscious. And this is not a conjecture or a wish, but a fact."[40]

But it was the war question—specifically the First Balkan War, the interimperialist rivalry over the breakup of the Ottoman Empire that began in October 1912—that Lenin lent most attention to leading up to and during the elections: "Austria has torn off a chunk (Bosnia and

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Herzegovina) and Italy has torn off another (Tripoli [Libya]); it is now our turn to enrich ourselves—such is the policy of *Novoye Vremya*." To explain to the readers of *Pravda* why this was happening, he resorted, again, to Marxist basics—and in the process anticipated his classic work of a few years later, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*: "In a society of wage slavery, every merchant and every proprietor plays a game of chance, saying as it were: 'I shall either be ruined or make a profit and ruin others.' Every year hundreds of capitalists go bankrupt and millions of peasants, handicraftsmen and artisans are ruined. The capitalist countries play a similar game of chance with the blood of millions, whom they send into a carnage now here, now there with the aim of seizing foreign territory and plundering their weaker neighbors."[41] As for a working-class response,

> Democrats in general and workers in particular are opposed to all "protection" of the Slavs by foxes or wolves, and advocate the complete self-determination of nations, complete democracy, and the liberation of the Slavs from *all* protection by the "Great Powers."
>
> The liberals and nationalists are arguing about *different ways* of plundering and enslaving the Balkan peoples by the European bourgeoisie. Only the workers are pursuing a genuinely democratic policy, for freedom and democracy everywhere and completely, against all "protection," plunder and intervention![42]

As for the masses of the Balkans embroiled in the war and the liberals who profess to promote their "liberty,"

> Never and nowhere has "liberty" been won by the oppressed peoples through one people waging *war* against another. Wars between peoples merely increase the enslavement of peoples. Real *liberty* for the Slav peasant in the Balkans, as well as for the Turkish peasant, can be ensured *only* by complete liberty inside *every* country and by a federation of completely and thoroughly democratic states.
>
> The Slav and the Turkish peasants in the Balkans are brothers who are equally "oppressed" by their landlords and their governments.[43]

Though written a century ago, there is a remarkable currency to Lenin's counsel.

The Elections Begin

"Safarov and Inessa, close comrades, went from Paris to St. Petersburg to make preparations for the election campaign . . . Inessa stopped at

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Cracow . . . and stayed with us for two days," reports Krupskaya.[44] In the summer of 1912, Lenin and his companion moved to Cracow in Poland—to be closer to the work they were directing. Knowing the challenges the campaign faced, the Central Committee, with Lenin's instructions, sent Inessa Armand, a Bolshevik leader, and G. I. Safarov, an Armenian comrade, to reestablish the St. Petersburg branch of the party—the repression of the regime following the May Day protests had taken a toll—to bring the editors of *Pravda* on board politically, and to begin preparations for the all-important workers' curiae elections.[45] After some frustrations on the first two fronts, Armand, working undercover, scored a success with the workers at the Putilov Works plant. After hearing her report on the Prague Conference, they decided to support the Bolshevik line and take part in the elections. She arranged a meeting on September 14 to select a slate of six Bolshevik candidates. Unfortunately, the police also knew of the meeting, and she and the others were arrested.[46]

Though jail would prevent Armand from seeing the results, the seeds she planted on September 14, the day of her arrest, bore not just any fruit but that of a protagonist who left a priceless eyewitness account of what happened afterward. Five weeks later, after much political drama—some of which foreshadowed the heady days of 1917—Alexei Badayev, a worker in the car repair shops of the Nikolaievsky Railway, was one of the four individuals elected at the St. Petersburg provincial council elections on October 20 to represent one of the capital's four class constituencies in the Fourth Duma. Badayev was also a Bolshevik.

The Bolsheviks in the Tsarist Duma, Badayev's recollections about his election to and experiences in the Fourth Duma, is indeed invaluable. After summarizing in the first chapter the Bolshevik (i.e., Lenin's) strategy for the Fourth Duma elections, he describes in the second in instructive detail the process that led to his election. The elections were a veritable obstacle course designed to discourage the participation of workers. Organization and planning ahead was a necessity because, as Badayev explains, the "precise date of the elections was not known beforehand. This was one of the tricks of the government, which, by fixing the election date suddenly, attempted to take the workers unawares and to decrease the number of voters."

Organizing the campaign required an office, and because of the newspaper's legal status, the "Bolshevik headquarters for the campaign were the editorial offices of *Pravda*." Having the space, however, was only one hurdle overcome. "Owing to the fact that incessant watch was kept by the police on every 'suspicious' worker, we had to resort to all sorts of subterfuges in order to gather together even in small groups. Usually, in

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order to avoid the attentions of the police, small meetings of not more than ten to twenty people were called. Summer helped us. Under the guise of picnic-parties, groups of workers went to the suburbs, mostly into the forest beyond the Okhta [River]. The forest was the best refuge from police spies, who would not venture beyond the outskirts, for it was easy to escape from there, and they were afraid of being attacked in some out-of-the-way spot."

Another and more serious problem concerned the selection of candidates. Because they "would certainly have been arrested . . . the names of the prospective candidates were kept secret, and the workers were only informed of them at the last moment before the elections." In some ways this actually aided the Bolsheviks, because in the debates with the Menshevik liquidators the latter wanted to make the campaign about "unity" and the personal characteristics of the candidates, whereas the former wanted the focus on the platform, particularly what Badayev calls "the three whales"—"the democratic republic," "an eight-hour day," and "the confiscation of all landlords' estates."

Not only did workers face obstacles. So too, to a lesser extent, did the petit bourgeois constituents for the second urban curiae elections—of major importance for Lenin. And for that reason "*Pravda*. . . conducted a great campaign against the absenteeism of the city democratic electors, calling upon them to safeguard their rights and to perform all the formalities required. Every issue of the paper reminded the electors to see to it that their names were not left out of the electoral lists and to make the requisite applications to the electoral commissions. *Pravda* called upon each of its readers to secure not less than three voters from among his comrades at the bench or his neighbors in the house where he lived." Convincing workers to participate in the elections was indeed a challenge, as Lenin told Gorky: "We are now 'up to the ears' in the elections. Absenteeism is damnably great. In the worker curia likewise."[47]

Badayev's election began in "the middle of the summer, [when he] learned that the Party organization had nominated me as a candidate." His standing among his coworkers was decisive in the choice, because the first stage in the workers' curiae elections was the selection of delegates at the factory level. On September 14 thousands of factory workers in their different work places met to select about eighty delegates for the next elections in the three-stage process. In Badayev's plant, after a heated debate between Bolsheviks, Menshevik-liquidators, and nonpartisan workers, he, along with another comrade, was elected to be a delegate from his plant to participate in the second stage. Because the regime wouldn't allow the eighty delegates to come together to discuss and debate

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who they wanted to be the six worker electors for the provincial assembly before the meeting scheduled to do so, October 5—the workers' curiae or second stage of the process—"the press campaigns," Badayev writes, "played an enormous part in the second stage of the elections." By this time, the Menshevik-liquidators, with financial support from the German party—a not unimportant fact to be discussed later—had their own daily, *Luch* [*The Ray*], to promote their line and candidates.

The workers' curiae met on October 5, but the regime, for reasons not clear, decided the day before to disqualify the elections in 21 work places, including the all-important Putilov Works. This led to massive citywide working-class protests, with the Putilov workers leading the way, and a turning point in the St. Petersburg elections. If just a few thousand workers took part in the election of delegates, tens of thousands—"more than 70,000 were involved in the movement"—now demanded in the streets that they had the right to do so. The actions forced the regime to grant new elections in the plants where they had been disqualified, and the result was a much more radical and politicized workers' curiae that convened anew on October 17. The day before the meeting, Lenin weighed in with an article in *Pravda*, "Deputy of the St. Petersburg Workers." After laying out what was at stake, he concluded,

> The workers need a deputy who will express the will of the majority and will know for certain *what* work he will carry out in and outside the Duma.
>
> The will of the majority has been stated, and the deputy for St. Petersburg should be a determined opponent of liquidationism and a supporter of consistent working-class democracy.[48]

On the day of the election, *Pravda*, as it had done for the October 5 meeting, "published lists of suitable candidates."[49]

Whereas the October 5 assembly was not allowed to have a debate, the reconvened curiae, with about twice as many delegates, met for four hours—registering what had been achieved in the streets: "The delegates decided to use this occasion to make a political demonstration and proposed a number of resolutions on current political conditions. Resolutions were passed, protesting against the Balkan war (which was then in progress); binding the future deputy to raise the question of retrying the case of the members of the Second Duma who had been exiled; and protesting against the sentences on the Black Sea sailors [accused of conspiring to mutiny]."

Most significant, writes Badayev, "at the end of the meeting, the St. Petersburg workers' instructions to their delegates, as proposed by the Bolsheviks, were unanimously adopted." Drafted apparently by Stalin,

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the one-page "instructions emphasized the importance of using the Duma tribunal for revolutionary propaganda and demanded that both the St. Petersburg deputy and the whole Social-Democratic fraction should fight for the 'unabridged' demands of the working class." Despite the unanimous vote for the Bolshevik "instructions," the outcome for the vote for the six electors was evenly divided between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.[50] Unsuccessful discussions and negotiations took place between the two factions to try to reach an accord prior to the third stage of the process: the provincial assembly meeting that would select the four deputies to the Fourth Duma that would represent St. Petersburg.[51] The Bolsheviks argued that since the curiae voted unanimously for a Bolshevik platform, the six electors should unify around one of their three electors at the next stage. The Menshevik-liquidators, not surprisingly, didn't see it that way. The Bolsheviks even proposed that lots be drawn to settle the question, but that, too, was rejected.

The selection process at the St. Petersburg provincial assembly meeting on October 20, composed of 66 electors, began with the election of a deputy to represent the peasants. Of the five peasant electors, "four were Progressives ['a cross-breed of Octobrists and Cadets,' as Lenin described them] and one Right. We agreed to vote for the Progressive candidate on condition that, if elected, he would vote with the Social-Democratic fraction on bills concerning the workers. The candidate they nominated was elected. A Progressive was also successful for the houseowners [the second urban curiae], while an Octobrist was chosen to represent the landlords. Then the college proceeded with the election of a deputy to represent the workers. All the workers' electors, both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, went to the ballot. When the votes were counted, I was declared elected, having received thirty-four votes against twenty-nine. The Liquidators received considerably less votes."[52] Needless to say, the Menshevik-liquidators were not pleased and "at once opened a slanderous campaign about the way the elections had been conducted"—foreshadowing the course of Bolshevik-Menshevik relations in the Fourth Duma.[53]

The Duma Convenes

The Fourth Duma commenced on November 15, 1912, with a new RSDLP fraction. The election results, again the product of rules that severely prejudiced working-class representation, ensured the Czar an even more loyal Duma. Unlike for the Third Duma, the fraction this time, though slightly smaller, was almost evenly split between the two wings of Russian social democracy and more proletarian in composition. That fact and the two very different campaign lines, a liberal labor versus a Marxist

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labor policy, largely explain the intrafraction tensions that surfaced at the beginning. A Bolshevik leadership meeting was soon convened to make sure its wing of the fraction, along with the editors of *Pravda*, worked in accord. Progress was registered by the fact that by the time of the summer recess for the Duma, the differences between its deputies and those of the Menshevik-liquidators were clearer and increasingly unbridgeable. The situation required another leadership meeting.

"RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS"

"An election campaign is of outstanding interest to any intelligent political leader because it furnishes *objective* data on the views and sentiments, and consequently interests, of the different *classes* of society. Elections to a representative body are comparable in this respect to a census of the population, for they provide political statistics." Analyzing them, Lenin cautioned, had to take into account the circumstances and rules of the elections—especially for the Fourth Duma given "their systematic rigging by the government." And only those afflicted with "parliamentary cretinism" would think them more important than "strike statistics." "Despite all these reservations, it is beyond question that elections supply *objective* data. Testing subjective wishes, sentiments and views by taking into account the vote of the *mass* of the population representing different classes should always be of value to a politician who is at all worthy of the name. The struggle of parties—in practice, before the electorate, and with the returns summed up—invariably furnishes data *serving to test* our conception of the balance of the social forces in the country and of the significance of particular 'slogans.'"[54]

Once all the returns were in, Lenin could indulge his penchant for number crunching—why he urged the editors of *Pravda* a week after the elections "not to break off the study of the election results."[55] The bare official results showed that social democrats won 14 seats and the Trudoviks 11 for a total of 25 for "Democracy" of the 442 seats in the new Duma. "Liberals," with the Cadets being the largest component, won 128 seats, while the "Rightists" won 283. "As a result, we have an even 'blacker' and even more Rightist Duma, but it is the Octobrists that today turn out to be the defeated party. The liberal opposition and revolutionary democracy (Social-Democratic workers and peasant bourgeois democrats) have almost managed to retain the status quo."[56]

Though the 14 seats the social democrats won were five less than in the elections to the Third Duma in 1907, of greater significance is that for the first time the Bolsheviks won all the six seats allocated to the workers'

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curiae. The Mensheviks won seven seats but in other curiae by blocking with liberals and petit bourgeois democrats. The one other "Social Democrat," from Warsaw, was elected—due mainly to the maneuvers of the Bund—against the wishes of the Polish Social Democratic Party. After a heated debate between the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks about admitting him to the fraction, because he was seen by the former as an ally, a compromise was reached that granted him voice but not vote in internal fraction affairs. Thus the effective division in the fraction, from the beginning, was the "the seven" versus "the six." The Bolsheviks questioned the legitimacy of the Menshevik "majority," since one of its members was the choice of the provincial assembly in Siberia in which almost half of the electors from the worker's curia had been "disqualified" by the regime—what gave the Mensheviks, in Lenin's terms, an "accidental majority."

"Results of the Elections," a detailed examination of the returns, made a case for the correctness of the strategy agreed to at the Prague Conference regarding the workers' curiae elections to campaign independently of the Menshevik-liquidators on the basis of the "three whales" or slogans of a Marxist labor policy. Winning all the six curiae in the most industrial regions of Russia meant that the latter was far more attractive to the working class than the "liberal labor policy"—"a test of slogans." As Lenin wrote later, "These figures speak for themselves!" Most instructive were the second-round elections to the second urban curiae. Not only had social democracy increased its vote over what it got in the elections for the Third Duma—"they are wresting more and more from the liberals"[57]—but the data showed that the most likely opponent of a social democratic nominee had been a Cadet. They were also more willing to enter into an alliance with a Right to prevent a social democrat from winning. The Cadets and Black Hundreds realized they had more in common with one another than they did with revolutionary democrats—the "'End' of The Illusions About the Cadet Party." The ever observant and honest analyst admitted that he had "continued to *overestimate*" the potential for a bloc with the liberals to prevent a Right from winning.[58] The returns steeled him even more in his conviction that any bending to liberals, as the Menshevik-liquidators were prone to do, must be vigorously opposed.

Based on the best data he had at his disposal about the actual membership of the RSDLP, Lenin argued that the Mensheviks were overrepresented in the new Duma—just as they had been in the Third—and that required an explanation:

> As a general rule, in all countries of the world the parliamentary representatives of the workers' parties have a *more opportunist* composition than that of the workers' parties themselves. The reason is easy to see: firstly, all

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> the electoral systems of the bourgeois countries, even the most democratic, in practice *restrict* suffrage for the workers, either by making it conditional on age (in Russia it has to be 25 years), or on residence and permanence of work (six months in Russia), etc. And it is the young, more politically-conscious and resolute sections of the proletariat that these restrictions generally hit hardest of all.
>
> Secondly, under *any* suffrage in bourgeois society, the non-proletarian elements of the workers' parties—officials of workers' unions, small proprietors, office employees, and particularly the "intelligentsia"—specialize more readily in the "parliamentary" profession (owing to their occupations, social standing, training, etc.).[59]

Lenin's insights about the electoral/parliamentary process—again, not limited to Russia—had real implications for fraction work in the Fourth Duma. All six Bolshevik deputies, like Badayev, were industrial workers, while three of the seven Mensheviks were from the intelligentsia. One of the latter, Nikolai Chkheidze, had headed the fraction in the Third Duma and thus was more knowledgeable than any of the 13 about the ways of the Duma; he was chosen, not surprisingly, to head the new fraction. The situation was complicated by the fact that one of the six Bolsheviks was Roman Malinovsky, the choice of Moscow's workers' curiae and also, as later discovered, the aforementioned "fly in the ointment"—a police agent. Aware of the political, class, and experiential unevenness of the fraction, Lenin tried unsuccessfully to bring them, at least the Bolsheviks, to Cracow before the Duma convened to plan their intervention. During the Duma's summer recess in 1913, he tried again, unsuccessfully—owing mainly to a lack of funds and arrests—to organize a school near Cracow where they could be instructed in the fundamentals of Marxism and other relevant topics to aid them in their Duma work. As he told Plekhanov in a letter of invitation "to deliver lectures . . . we . . . think it very useful that Party people, of various views should take part in an enterprise which seems to us extremely important for strengthening connections with the workers and reinforcing Party work."[60]

Organizing and Working with the New Fraction

The inexperience of the fraction was quickly revealed on the Duma's first day, November 15. Rank-and-file workers in the RSDLP and other organizations decided it would be a good opportunity to greet its opening with a protest. When the fraction got wind of their plans a few days earlier, they issued, with the Mensheviks leading the way, a "warning" to the organizers to cease and desist, because apparently the action hadn't been

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authorized by the leadership of the St. Petersburg branch. Lenin criticized their response. For him the protest was a "perfectly timed demonstration! Wonderful proletarian instinct, the ability to counter and contrast the opening of the Black-Hundred 'parliament' with red banners in the streets of the capital! . . . a truly popular, truly democratic, purely labor demonstration . . . a people's representative assembly." So "how could the Social-Democratic group 'warn'? How could it stoop to the level of Cadets—to a slavish level?"

If their concern was that the action was somehow intended to be a violent provocation engineered by the police, an excuse to victimize workers, then the objection was justifiable from "a *personal* point of view, but not *politically*." It is true that "one must not resort to violence when there is no question of it. One must warn against violence. But to warn against a peaceful strike at a time when the masses are *seething*? To warn against a *demonstration*?" The criticism then took a constructive tone—what "a real workers' deputy" would have done once plans for the protests were learned:

> The workers' deputy would have found his way to several influential workers. He would have realized that at *such* a time his place was alongside the prominent workers, that it was a hundred times more important to be there with the workers than at the meetings of the Duma group. He would have learned from the prominent workers, from two or three (or perhaps four or five) *influential* workers of the capital, *how matters stood*, what the workers *thought* about it, and *what the mood* of the masses was.
>
> The workers' deputy would have made inquiries about these things—he would have *known how* to make inquiries about them, and would have learnt that there was to be a strike (15 to 50 *thousand!!* according to the bourgeois press), that there was to be a demonstration, that the workers were not thinking of violence and disorders, and that, *consequently*, the rumor about a provocation was no more than a silly rumor.

Lenin's advice went to the very heart of his politics and parliamentary strategy—like that of Marx and Engels, the need to prioritize the world outside the parliamentary arena, specifically the masses in motion and its proletarian vanguard. As well as opposition to gratuitous violence, it captured the essence of what he would try to impart to the new deputies—an opportune teaching moment early in the life of the fraction. At the end he struck a sympathetic but principled chord: "It is a very, very sad mistake the Social-Democratic Duma group as a whole has made. And it would be gratifying to learn that this mistake was not made by all, and that many of those who did make it realize their mistake and will not repeat it."[61]

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To assist the fraction in its first Duma intervention, the customary party declaration, Lenin sent a list of points that should be incorporated in the speech.[62] After intense negotiations between both wings of the fraction, Malinovsky, the vice chair of the fraction, was chosen, at the initiative of the Mensheviks, to deliver the declaration on December 7. The agreed on statement essentially combined their two lines. The only unexpected moment for the fraction in his presentation came, as Badayev related, when he "omitted a passage of considerable length criticizing the State Duma and demanding the sovereignty of the people."[63] Nevertheless, *Pravda* printed the full speech. Only in hindsight would it become clear why the omission was made.

Badayev and other fraction members forgave Malinovsky because they knew what it was like for a working-class revolutionary giving a maiden speech on clearly hostile terrain. Between the harangues and interruptions of the Black Hundred chair of the Duma and the hooting of the large Right presence in Tauride Palace, a fraction member could indeed be distracted, as Malinovsky claimed. A week later, Badayev made his first speech, an interpellation about the persecution of trade unions. Exactly because of the undemocratic obstacle course that governed Duma procedures, his intervention had to be carefully planned beforehand. His account of the experience is telling:

> The nervousness to which every workers' deputy was subject when making his first speech in the Duma was unique in his experience. When I mounted the rostrum I felt very keenly the responsibility which rested on a workers' representative. A speech in the Duma did not resemble in any way those speeches which I had to deliver at various illegal and legal meetings of workers . . . Each of us experienced great difficulty when making his first speech in this home of tsarist autocracy. It was a great strain to talk down the howling of the Black Hundreds, to fight against the continual interruptions of the chairman.[64]

If the atmosphere within Tauride Palace was hostile, except for the few workers who were allowed to attend, what was taking place outside helped to steel the nervous Badayev. The St. Petersburg party leadership called for and organized—unlike the actions that greeted the convening of the Duma on November 14—a one-day strike to coincide with his speech as an expression of support. As for the number of participants, there were "certainly not fewer than 60,000, i.e. the number employed in the largest works in St. Petersburg." The fraction was beginning to find its feet.

A year after the Prague Conference, the Bolshevik leadership met again, this time with four of "the six": Malinovsky, Badayev, Grigory

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Petrovsky, and N. R. Shagov, the latter two elected respectively by the workers' curiae in Ekaterinoslav and Kostroma. The Duma's Christmas recess made that possible. The meeting, from December 26 to January 1, reaffirmed, in opposition to the Menshevik-liquidators, the necessity of underground work and made that the precondition for reconciliation with them. Another resolution applauded the "vigorous activity" of the fraction, "which found expression in a number of speeches in the Duma, the submission of interpellations and the reading of a declaration which in general correctly expressed the fundamental principles of Social-Democracy." The qualifier "in general" referred to one problem with the declaration. The compromise with the Mensheviks about its wording allowed for a slogan that violated an important provision in the party's 1902 program on the national question—an issue that would be revisited.

The resolution on the fraction also reaffirmed "our Party's established tradition . . . [that] the Duma Social-Democratic group is a body subordinate to the Party as a whole, in the shape of its central bodies . . . [C]areful attention should be paid to every step of the Social-Democratic group, and in this way Party control exercised over the group."[65] The London Congress in 1907, it may be remembered, formalized this "tradition." Three provisions in the resolution (unpublished for security reasons) gave concrete expression to this all-important norm. One called for a struggle with "the seven" to achieve equality in the fraction; another, that the four of "the six" who lent their names to be contributors to the liquidator's daily *Luch* when it came into existence should have them removed; and, third, that they "rally together for party work."[66] The latter probably referred to what Badayev most remembered about the meeting—the importance given "to the work outside the Duma . . . [for] 'the six' to whom the conference delegated many important tasks in connection with illegal party work." They were directed to use their parliamentary immunity and travel as often as possible to meet with their constituencies to do party-building work.

Before the Cracow conference, Lenin asked all the Bolshevik deputies to respond to a 19-point questionnaire about the process of their election. The encounter allowed him to have, except for Malinovsky, face-to-face contact with two-thirds of the fraction for the first time. Their responses to his 19 questions no doubt informed their discussions. "Lenin approached each deputy individually and succeeded in reinforcing in each of us," Badayev wrote, "the will to conduct an intense and sustained struggle."[67] Lenin sent his impressions to Gorky while they were together:

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> Malinovsky, Petrovsky and Badayev send you warm greetings and best wishes. They are good fellows, especially the first. Really, it is possible to build a workers' party with such people, though the difficulties are incredibly great. The base at Cracow has proved to be useful: our move to Cracow has fully "paid for itself" (from the point of view of the cause). The deputies confirm that a revolutionary mood is unquestionably growing among the mass of the workers. If we now create a good proletarian organization, without obstacles from the treacherous liquidators—the devil knows what victories we can then win when the movement from below develops.[68]

Having an organization in place "when the movement from below develops"—this is quintessential Lenin that goes back at least to *What Is to Be Done?*

A month and a half later, Lenin noted, again to Gorky, the first gains of the meeting: "Our six deputies in the Duma from the worker curia have now begun to work *outside the Duma* so energetically that it is a joy to see. This is where people will build up a real workers party! We were never able to bring this off in the Third Duma."[69] This was a real achievement, because the deputies were under intense police surveillance whenever they traveled, as Badayev detailed, and thus they had to resort to a lot of subterfuge.[70] Unbeknownst to them and Lenin, state security also knew—owing no doubt to reports from Malinovsky—about their party-building intentions. Last, Lenin asked Gorky, with undisguised pleasure, if he had seen the letter in *Luch* the four deputies had sent the daily requesting that their names be removed from its contributors list, as agreed to at the Cracow meeting. It registered another victory.

Badayev's account gives the impression that everyone was on the same page after Cracow. Lenin, certainly, gave more assistance to the Bolshevik wing of the fraction. For interventions in Duma debates, for example, he drafted a speech that Badayev gave on education reform—in which he pointed out that Russian peasants faired worst in comparison to the deplorable situation that confronted blacks in the United States—as well as providing suggestions on the always-important budget debate. But coordination between him and the Bolshevik deputies continued to be a challenge. Not the least of the "difficulties" was one of the "good fellows" he lauded. In the long run, however, and in hindsight, Cracow planted seeds that eventually bore fruit, and the party-building activities of the fraction were crucial in that development.

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Pravda: A Work in Progress

A month before Cracow, Lenin complained to the editor of *Pravda* that Badayev was not doing enough to help the daily: "A workers' paper in Petersburg without the cooperation of the workers' deputy for Petersburg (particularly as he is a *Pravda* supporter) is a stupid situation."[71] This was exactly one of the problems that the meeting sought to correct.

The 12-point resolution "On the Reorganization and Work of the *Pravda* Editorial Board" began by criticizing the board for its lack of "consistency of Party principle" and failure "to provide the necessary response to Party life among Social-Democratic workers in St. Petersburg." For that reason the "C.C. [Central Committee] is taking steps to reorganize" it. This was implicitly a criticism of Stalin, because until the conference he had been, for about half a year, the unofficial editor of the paper.[72] A new editor, Yakov Sverdlov, was designated. It was also resolved that the "Bolshevik section of the deputies must take part in the paper's broad editorial collegium [direction] and organize systematic and persistent participation in the literary and economic side of the business."[73] Badayev later explained, "On the recommendation of Comrade Lenin himself I was charged with the duty of publishing *Pravda*. Lenin told me that being the deputy for St. Petersburg, the representative of the St. Petersburg workers, I must take on that task. *Pravda* pursued not only educational and propagandist aims, but it was also the most important center for organization. He emphasized the point that my duty was to work there."[74]

For a few weeks afterward it looked to Lenin like the agreements reached at Cracow were being ignored. To *Pravda*'s new editor, he stressed why action had be taken immediately: "Unless we secure a reform and proper management in this field, we shall reach bankruptcy, both material and political. *Dyen* [the daily's code name] is the necessary means of organization for uniting and lifting up the movement . . . [T]he key to the whole situation is *Dyen*."[75] Ten days later he exhaled a sigh of relief: "Today we have learned of the beginning of reform in *Dyen*. A thousand greetings, congratulations and wishes for success. At long last you have managed to begin the reform."[76] Not only did *Pravda* have a new board, but the Bolshevik deputies were making "excellent" contributions in the form of articles and letters. Lenin even thought that one of the Menshevik deputies could be recruited to do the same.

Pravda's circulation testified to the progress that was being made for the four-page daily—"30–32 thousand on week-days and 40–42 thousand on holidays . . . The mass of workers are with us (40,000 *Pravda*, against 12,000 *Luch*)."[77] For the one-year anniversary of the paper, Lenin provided facts and figures. A comparison of "voluntary contributions"

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made by workers' groups to both dailies was, for him, most telling. From the first quarter of 1912 to the first ten days in April 1913, there had been 1,022 collections for *Pravda* and 256 for *Luch*. Also gratifying were the 177 contributions by workers' groups in Moscow for the paper launched there at the beginning of the year—one of the decisions made at Cracow.[78]

While things had improved, the paper faced objective problems. Four days after the editorial board changes, Sverdlov was arrested; a few days later the same happened to Stalin. Lenin couldn't understand why the Menshevik leader and editor of *Luch*, Dan, "lives quite freely" in St. Petersburg. "The liquidators have a mass of intellectuals, while all ours get arrested." And he didn't know that the solutions he proposed only aided and abetted the situation. "We have discussed with Malinovsky what measures to take." The lack of "intellectuals" was a related objective problem: "All the 'intelligentsia' are with the liquidators." Although *Pravda*'s working-class supporters "are producing their '*own*' intelligentsia," it was being done "slowly" and "with the greatest difficulty"—one of the reasons Lenin tried, again unsuccessfully, to organize a Marxist school during the summer recess of the Duma.[79] Given the shortage of skills required for the paper, Lenin stepped up his involvement, including especially the writing of more articles. He also offered advice on all kinds of matters, such as "Put in a telephone" or be more careful about "misprints" or know when to employ "large type." He acknowledged that the paper needed more variety and encouraged the editors to be more patient with a fledgling poet: "Don't find fault, friends, with human failings! Talent is rare. It should be systematically and carefully supported. It would be a sin on your conscience . . . against the democratic working-class movement, if you don't draw in this talented contributor and *don't help* him."[80]

Eventually, it became clear that relying on the working-class Duma deputies to put out the paper was not the solution. Party personnel with the requisite skills had to be in charge. But that, too, proved to be a problem. The new editor, Miron Chernomazov, and publisher, Vasily Shurkanov, were later discovered to be police agents.[81] Their presence probably explains an irritant that increasingly vexed Lenin—their willingness to give Bogdanov space in the paper to espouse what Lenin regarded as an idealist "god-making" philosophy. Only when he threatened to end relations with the paper did the situation improve. Keeping in mind that *Pravda* for Lenin was "the key to the *whole* situation"—that is, party building—it is understandable why he so insisted that it be a Marxist paper.

Another problem—no doubt related to the editor and publisher being double agents—was a tendency of the paper, increasingly by the fall of

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1913, to run unnecessarily provocative pieces. To its editors Lenin wrote, "It seems to me that you are making a gigantic mistake in drifting unconsciously with the stream *and not changing* the tone of the paper. Everything suggests that both the tone *and the content* of the news section must he *changed*. It is essential to *achieve* legality, ability to pass the censor."[82] The overall situation only improved in February 1914 when Kamenev took over the editorship reins for the last six months of the paper. Daily circulation had risen back to 40,000 copies—"even reaching 130,000 on *Pravda*'s second anniversary" in April 1914—and was distributed in 944 cities.[83] Though it could never rival the capitalist/Czarist press in readership, it was clearly the favorite of Russia's working class.

Lenin's concerns about "legality" were justified, because beginning in July 1913 the daily was shut down on seven different occasions. Badayev provides fascinating detail on the steps that had to be taken to stay one step ahead of the regime's repressive apparatus to make sure the paper was published and distributed. As soon as it was suppressed, for example, it would resume publication in about a week with a new name, always some variant of *Pravda*. The cat-and-mouse game finally came to an end a year later.

"The Seven" versus "the Six"

The already-tense relationship in the Duma fraction rapidly deteriorated when the Bolshevik deputies asked that their names be removed from the list of contributors to the Menshevik-liquidator daily *Luch*. The seven Menshevik deputies charged that their action undermined fraction unity and retaliated with a series of measures that gave undue influence to the former in fraction matters.[84] They imposed, as Lenin charged, their "accidental majority" of one on the six deputies who had been elected by the workers' curiae. Thus the larger issue was which wing of the fraction actually represented Russia's working class, particularly when it came to the question of liquidationism.

When the editors of *Luch* prominently ran an article in one of its January issues, Lenin felt he had irrefutable evidence to make his case against the Menshevik-liquidators. So important he thought the article to be that he reproduced it in full with his commentary as a hectographed leaflet for wide distribution. The author found "deplorable" that "sympathy for the 'underground' is reviving and growing here and there among the workers"—"a resurgent respect for the underground" that was "reminiscent" of the popularity of "terrorism" in an earlier era of the movement. For Lenin, on the other hand, "he who considers"

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the revived interest and respect for underground work "deplorable is a liberal and not a Social-Democrat, a counter-revolutionary and not a democrat. Comparing the underground with terrorism is an unheard-of affront to revolutionary work among the masses. Only the underground poses and solves problems of the growing revolution, directing revolutionary Social-Democratic work and attracting the mass of the workers precisely by this work."[85]

There was, in Lenin's view, a more fundamental issue at stake. Through illegal as well as legal work a "working-class party is being built up. Workers' independence, the influence of the workers on *their own* parliamentary group, decisions by the workers themselves on questions of their own party—such is the great historical significance of what is going on." As was true for Marx and Engels, independent working-class political action was the bottom line of Lenin's politics. That meant party building, and to call "deplorable" the very necessary means of "the underground" for doing that flew in the very face of social democracy. "One cannot," he reminded the editors of *Pravda*, "unite the Party with the destroyers of the Party."[86]

The all-important issue of "the influence of the workers on *their own* parliamentary group"—what Marx and Engels called attention to in an early criticism of the German party—was also at stake. Only with a party would workers be able to direct their deputies:

> In the present struggle *the very* question at issue is that of defending the *basic* principles of party life. The question of *what* policy *it* wants conducted in the Duma, what attitude *it* has to an open party or an underground one, and whether it considers the Duma group to be *above* the party or vice versa, is confronting every workers' study circle starkly, in a form that demands an immediate and direct answer . . . The liquidators are out *to prevent* the workers from building up their own working-class party—that is the meaning and significance of the struggle between "the six and the seven."[87]

Lenin framed the debate in an instructive way reminiscent of the memorable point Engels made in 1847 that "communism is not a doctrine but a movement": "Socialism is not a ready-made system that will be mankind's benefactor. Socialism is the class struggle of the present-day proletariat as it advances from one objective today to another objective tomorrow *for the sake* of its basic objective, to which it is *coming nearer* every day. In this country called Russia, socialism is today passing through the stage in which the politically conscious workers are themselves completing the organization of a working-class party despite the attempts of the liberal

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intelligentsia and the 'Duma Social-Democratic intelligentsia' *to prevent* that work of organization."

Behind the conflict lay, of course, the long-existent one going back to the First Duma about the character of the Russian revolution: "[W]e are divided," Lenin told the German party in March 1913, "from the liquidators by profound differences of principle—above all on the question of another revolution in Russia."[88] For Mensheviks, the majority of whom had allied by now with the liquidators, Russia's bourgeois democratic revolution was one in which liberals, the Cadets, would take the lead. Subjecting their Duma deputies to the discipline of a workers' party, exercised through the norms of democratic centralism, was rejected as a constraint on their maneuvering in their still unfulfilled quest to convince the Cadets of their supposed destiny. For the Bolshevik deputies, on the other hand, the constant refrain of Lenin about the treachery of the liberals and the proclivity of the latter to verify his thesis increasingly convinced them that independent working-class political action and thus party building was the priority. Later, and famously, he wrote, "without an organization the working class is *nothing*."[89] That the proletarian masses were voting with their feet, drawn to the underground, was even more persuasive.

A split in the fraction was clearly looming. It may be remembered that Martov threatened as much early in the election campaign to the Fourth Duma; the two incompatible lines in the campaign were now embodied in the fraction. For Lenin, the only question now was how to carry out a split in a way that advanced the revolutionary process. That would require a party meeting.

While the Marxist summer school Lenin envisioned couldn't convene, a delegated Bolshevik meeting did take place in the same location not far from Cracow at the end of September 1913 during the summer recess of the Duma. All the Bolshevik deputies, except for one who was sick, participated in the second or Cracow II meeting. Duma strategy and tactics, as always, depended on the larger political context. The resolution on "The Present Situation," the first of nine, affirmed that the "situation in the country is becoming increasingly acute" and reaffirmed the currency of the "revolutionary slogans": the democratic republic, the confiscation of landed estates, and the eight-hour day. In the discussion and resolution on "Activities in the Duma," refinements were made on the tactics of bill writing and voting:

> If bills, motions, etc., concern immediate and direct improvements in conditions for workers, minor salaried employees and working people generally (for example, reduction of hours, increase of wages, the removal of even minor evils in the lives of the workers and of broad sections of the

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population in general, etc.), the clauses that provide for such improvements should be voted for.

In cases when the conditions the Fourth Duma attaches to these improvements make them dubious, the group should abstain from voting, but must *unfailingly* formulate its motives for so doing, after having first discussed the question with representatives of workers' organizations.

This Conference affirms that:

on all questions, important bills, etc., the Socialist-Democratic group in the Duma must independently formulate its own motion to pass on to next business.

In cases of the group's vote against the government, after the Social-Democratic motion has been rejected, coinciding with the vote of other parties, the group must endeavor to formulate its own motives for voting for another party's motion, or part of a motion.[90]

On what was clearly the most pressing agenda item—the situation in the Duma group—the meeting, after describing how "the seven deputies encroach on the elementary rights of the six workers' deputies who represent the overwhelming majority of the workers of Russia," proposed a solution:

This Conference is therefore of the opinion that united action on the part of the Social-Democratic group in the Duma is possible only if the two sections of the group enjoy equal rights, and if the seven deputies abandon their steam roller tactics.

Notwithstanding irreconcilable disagreements in spheres of activity outside as well as inside the Duma, this Conference demands that the group should maintain unity on the basis of the aforesaid equality of rights of its two sections.

This Conference invites class-conscious workers to express their opinion on this important question and to exert all efforts to help preserve the unity of the group on the only possible basis, that of equal rights for the six workers' deputies.[91]

The "irreconcilable disagreements" meant that Lenin, certainly, had no hope that "the seven" would agree to equality in the fraction. Yet he clearly knew that for most workers the dispute was confusing and all they wanted was unity. So the proposal was phrased defensively, to put the burden of unity on "the seven."

PRELUDE TO THE "GREAT WAR"

With both the Duma fraction and Central Committee in agreement after a collective discussion about how to deal with "the seven," "the six"

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returned to St. Petersburg and threw down the gauntlet. The chief task was to prove that their politics were more popular with Russia's most class-conscious proletariat than those of the Menshevik-liquidators. They did so by employing a variety of measures in a society that didn't allow for open and free decision making. Outside of Russia, however, at least in the leadership circles of Western European social democracy, their opponents were more popular. Opportunism and reformism had taken their toll. But in the crisis-ridden circumstances of a three-hundred-year-old autocracy on life support, those who were willing to do all that was necessary to finally pull the plug only enhanced their credibility, notwithstanding the obstacles they faced. Whether planned or not, the regime managed to delay a showdown by firing the first shot in what came to be called the "Great War."

"Declaration" and Split

Shortly after the Fourth Duma reconvened, the Bolshevik deputies submitted to "the seven" the equality proposal and published it the next day as a "Declaration" in *Za Pravdu* [*For Truth*], the latest edition of *Pravda*. As expected it was rejected, and at the end of October 1913 "the six" designated themselves a separate fraction, the Russian Social Democratic Labor Group, as distinct from the Social Democratic Group in the Duma. The task now was to win the majority of workers to support the new fraction and *Pravda*, or whatever name the organ would have.

Given the understandable confusion the split created among many workers—which the Cracow discussion anticipated—making known the facts was crucial. In addition to what "the six" wrote and said, Lenin put together a package of data for a special issue of *Pravda*.[92] The focus was on two claims: first, that "the six," unlike "the seven," represented the majority of Russia's workers and, second, that the latter had unfairly used their "accidental majority" of one to thwart the equal participation of the former in the fraction. As for the first, Lenin elaborated on the significance of the workers' curiae elections and added data on other elections, specifically those to the governing boards of trade unions—especially the very powerful metal workers union—and the workers' sick insurance boards. In every case the Bolsheviks outdistanced the Menshevik-liquidators. Lenin added data on the circulation of the *Pravda* and *Luch*, which showed that the former was three to four times more popular.

Regarding the second claim, Lenin, with the input of the Bolshevik deputies, elaborated on the "steam roller tactics" of "the seven," specifically

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their over representation on Duma committees because of the one vote majority advantage they enjoyed in the fraction:

> Of the 26 committees on which the Social-Democrats are represented:
>
> the six deputies are represented on *seven*; the other seven deputies are represented on *thirteen*—nearly *twice as many*.
>
> Of the 20 committees on which there is one Social-Democratic representative:
>
> the six deputies are represented on *seven*; the other seven are represented on *thirteen*—nearly *twice as many*.
>
> Of the committees on which there are two Social-Democratic representatives:
>
> the six deputies are represented on *three*; the other seven are represented on *six—twice as many*.
>
> On each of three of these committees the seven had two representatives.
>
> Not one of the six deputies sits on more than two committees. Of the seven, *Chkhenkeli sits on six committees*; *Skobelev sits on six*, *and Mankov sits on four*.[93]

Both *Za Pravdu* and *Novaya Rabochaya Gazeta* (successor to *Luch*) mounted campaigns respectively for "the six" and "the seven." Workers were asked to send signed—with the risks that entailed—statements and/or resolutions of support for either fraction. At the end of the year about ten thousand had been received. Almost seven thousand were in favor of the Bolshevik deputies as opposed to about three thousand for "the seven." Lenin ridiculed Martov's claim that "the six" had garnered just "slightly more than half" of the total. But there was a larger significance:

> No other political party in Russia can show, for the whole period of the counter-revolution in general and for 1913 in particular, a similar *open and mass opinion poll of all its members* on a most important issue of Party life. None of the legalized parties in Russia, none of the wealthy liberal and democratic parties, which have a host of intellectualist forces and all sorts of publications at their command, has done as much as the party of the working class, the party of propertyless proletarians, who have been driven underground and maintain their newspaper with the kopeks [pennies] they collect.[94]

Even more telling in Lenin's opinion were the collections that workers sent to the two Duma fractions "for the relief of comrades in prison or exile, for aid to strikers in different factories and industries, and for various other needs of the working-class movement." Owing to their parliamentary immunity, Duma deputies could (in theory at least) engage

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in such assistance.[95] From the end of October 1913 to June 1914, almost 1,300 workers' groups sent collections to "the six" as opposed to about 200 to "the seven." And in terms of the actual amounts, about half of what "the seven" got came from "non-workers," whereas the equivalent for "the six" was less than 10 percent—crucial evidence that, again, "the six" were the real representatives of Russia's working class.

The success of the support campaign for "the six" had broader and long-term significance. It took, as Lenin had always envisioned, Duma work to "the outside," beyond the walls of Tauride Palace, where it should be. Until then, the de facto split between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks was mainly an internal party affair. Because of the campaign, as Badayev explained in convincing detail, "the Bolsheviks had carried new positions and considerably widened and deepened their influence among the workers . . . The campaign . . . resulted in an influx of workers into the ranks of the Party, and the whole of our Party work was infused with new vigor."[96] The success of the campaign for "the six" did more than anything to make the Bolsheviks known among the Russian working class. It explains why they had a head start in 1917. Another campaign involving "the six"—to be discussed shortly—was also influential.

As for "the seven," the admission in January 1914 of one of their leaders about the state of the group foretold the fate of the Mensheviks: "'[I]t has lost all influence, deserted the political life of the country, broken its connections with the workers and finally forced the most active members to leave the fraction and consequently brought the work of the fraction to a standstill.'"[97] The campaign for "the six" affirmed a principle dear to Lenin that has utmost importance for this book—the norm that a workers' parliamentary fraction should be subordinate to their will. The erosion of that principle in Western European social democracy would be tragically exposed a few months later—and reverberates until today.

The Cadets, not surprisingly, closely followed the fight within Russian social democracy and wrote, in Lenin's opinion, a very perceptive and telling article about it. "The seven," in the author's eyes, and for whom he was rooting, were, according to Lenin's quotes, "the parliamentary elements of Social-Democracy" around which "the entire intelligentsia" of the party grouped. "The six," on the other hand, constituted "the irreconcilables," the "non-parliamentary workers' majority." Russian social democracy could evolve in the direction of its Western Europe counterpart if it could function in an open legal way. But the "longer the transition to this normal existence is delayed . . . the more the reason will there be to anticipate that the parliamentary majority of the Social-Democratic intellectuals [i.e., 'the seven'] will be compelled to yield to the

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non-parliamentary workers' majority and to its present mood." In other words, the delay in instituting bourgeois democracy in Russia increased the likelihood of a revolutionary outcome. History would indeed confirm the author's insight.

But what the Cadet author couldn't see or admit to is how the "treachery" of his party aided and abetted the intransigence of the regime. The Cadets viscerally disagreed with Lenin's perspective about reforms, encapsulated best in what he wrote at the height of the 1905 upheaval: "[W]e must fight in a revolutionary way for a parliament but not in a parliamentary way for a revolution." Lenin knew—from the lessons of the "European Spring"—what every liberal feared, as Marx and Engels put it in their *Address of March 1850*: "the revolution in permanence." A revolutionary fight for a parliament might end, to their horror, just that way. Russian liberals would rather enable autocracy than risk democracy. The debates within Russian social democracy over a revolutionary versus a reformist electoral/parliamentary strategy, therefore, made not only Lenin increasingly aware of the parallels with Western Europe but the Cadets as well—most relevant, again, for one of the arguments of this book.

Opportunism and Reformism in Western Europe

Parliamentary politics in Britain continued to attract Lenin's attention exactly because of the potential lessons for Russia's working class. "It is well known," he wrote as elections for the Fourth Duma were under way, "that in Britain there are two workers' parties: the British Socialist Party (BSP), as the Social-Democrats now call themselves, and the so-called Independent Labor Party . . . The Independent Labor Party (ILP) is a party of liberal labor policy. It is justly said that this Party is 'independent' only of socialism, but very dependent on liberalism." Its annual conference in 1912 was instructive. A debate and vote arose about whether its MP's should support their counterparts in the Liberal Party. Although the "opportunists carried the day," he was heartened by the size of the "opposition in the ranks of this very Party. The opponents of opportunism acted far more correctly than their like-minded colleagues in Germany frequently do when they defend rotten compromises with the opportunists."[98]

As for the British Labor Party, "which must be distinguished from the *two* socialist parties," it was the "workers' organization that is most opportunist and soaked in the spirit of liberal-labor policy." The vote of their parliamentary group on budget allocations for the British navy early in 1913 was also instructive. Only 15 of their 40 MP's supported the ILP

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motion to reduce spending. "There you have a striking example of how opportunism leads to the *betrayal* of socialism, the *betrayal* of the workers' cause . . . From the example of other people's mistakes, the Russian workers, too, should learn to understand how fatal are opportunism and liberal-labor policy."[99]

A highly visible by-election later in the year instantiated his characterization of the ILP, "for whom our liquidators express such tender feelings." The resignation, for personal reasons, of the head of the ILP, Ramsey MacDonald, made the election possible. Working-class rank-and-file members of the ILP in the constituency moved to back as a replacement a candidate of the British Socialist Party. "The I.L.P. Parliamentary group intervened and published a *protest* in the *Liberal* press (which, like [that of our Cadets] . . . helps the opportunists)" against the BSP candidate. Their action ensured the election of a Liberal. Lenin doffed his reporter's hat: "Class-conscious workers in various countries quite often adopt a 'tolerant' attitude toward the British I.L.P. This is a great mistake. The *betrayal* of the workers' cause in Leicester [the constituency] by the I.L.P. is no accident, but the result of the *entire* opportunist policy of the Independent Labor Party. The sympathies of all *real* Social-Democrats should be with those British Social-Democrats who are determinedly combating the Liberal corruption of the workers by the 'Independent' Labor Party in Britain."[100] This was Lenin's most explicit call to date for the need to oppose opportunism in a Western European working-class movement.

His allusion to the failings of the German party presaged the coming divorce. What's striking was Lenin's forbearance until then. In early 1913 he complained to its leadership, still his "comrades," about its very nonneutral stance vis-à-vis the split in its sister party: "Either for lack of information or for some other reason, the Vorstand [executive] has not displayed impartiality in respect of the liquidators and us." For example, the "Central Organ of the fraternal German Party (*Vorwärts*) sets aside whole columns for gross attacks by the liquidators on our" Prague conference. "During," also, "the election campaign, the Vorstand, despite our protests, gave cash assistance to the liquidators, but denied it to the Central Committee . . . And the liquidators used the German workers money to start their publication of a Konkurrenzorgan [rival organ] *Luch* . . . whose first issue appeared *on the very day of the election* [to the Fourth Duma] and helped to aggravate the split."[101]

And then there was Kautsky. As early as 1904, *Neue Zeit*, the party's theoretical organ that he edited, found pro-Menshevik views more palatable than those of Lenin. Nevertheless, the Bolshevik leader was willing, apparently, to ignore that history as long as Kautsky spoke like a

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revolutionary. But "Kautsky's Unpardonable Error," the title of Lenin's article in a December 1913 issue of *Pravda*, signaled the end of his patience. By saying at a meeting of the Socialist International on the split in the Russian movement that the RSDLP "had disappeared," Kautsky affirmed, in effect, the position of the liquidators. His "monstrous blunder," Lenin charged, "not only betrayed ignorance of the facts about the Russian working-class movement, but also revealed what sort of influence the liquidator whisperers abroad exercise upon our foreign comrades."[102]

A leading figure in the German party's Reichstag fraction (the SPD) published an account of his recent trip to the United States, where he was invited to address Congress. Lenin concurred with his praise "that in America the government provides every congressman not only with a private office fitted all modern conveniences, but also with a paid secretary to help him cope with a congressman's manifold duties"—amenities unavailable to deputies in the Reichstag and the Duma. But he severely chastised the SPD leader's proud defense of his speech for not having said anything "against capitalism and in favor of a mass strike." On display, Lenin argued, was just the most recent example of the degree to which opportunism had infected "the officers' corps" of the German working class. He recalled that at the 1907 Stuttgart Congress of the Socialist International, "half of the German delegation turned out to be sham socialists of this type, who voted for the ultra-opportunist resolution on the colonial question" (see Chapter 4 in the first volume, *LES1905*). The more that liberals and liquidators try to import such practices "*to our soil*, the more determinedly must they be resisted . . . the merits of German Social-Democracy are merits, not because of shameful speeches like those delivered by [the deputy] . . . but *despite* them. We must not try to play down the *disease* which the German party is undoubtedly suffering from, and which reveals itself in phenomena of this kind; nor must we play it down with 'officially optimistic' phrases. We must lay it bare to the Russian workers, so that we may learn from the experience of the older movement, learn what should not be copied from it."[103] Five months after he wrote these lines, "the disease" would reveal itself in a way that even Lenin could not have imagined.

Another publication in 1913 was the correspondence of Marx and Engels—the most complete to date. Although under the joint editorship of Eduard Bernstein and August Bebel, the hand of the former predominated. Given his "extreme opportunist views . . . Bernstein," Lenin opined, "should never have undertaken" the task.[104] His "prefaces are in part meaningless and in part simply false . . . Unfortunately, the eclectic attitude to Marx's ideological struggle against many of his opponents is

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becoming increasingly widespread among present-day German Social-Democrats." Despite the failings of Bernstein, the four-volume publication was sorely needed: "The more we have occasion in our day to observe how the working class movement in various countries suffers from opportunism . . . the more valuable becomes the wealth of material contained in the correspondence."[105]

One of the reasons why Bernstein exercised such influence on the publication is that Bebel was in declining health. When he died shortly after the four volumes appeared, Lenin used the moment to acquaint Russian workers with the history of the German movement. Bebel—unlike Kautsky, Lenin emphasized—was a worker, and though only 27 when he was elected as a social democrat to the new German parliament when it was established in 1869, his conduct provided enduring lessons: "The fundamentals of parliamentary tactics for German (and international) Social-Democracy, tactics that never yield an inch to the enemy, never miss the slightest opportunity to achieve even small improvements for the workers and are at the same time implacable on questions of principle and always directed to the accomplishment of the final aim—the fundamentals of these tactics were elaborated by Bebel himself or under his direct leadership and with his participation." Along with Wilhelm Liebknecht—and supported with the moral authority of Marx and Engels—he led the charge against the first signs of the "parliamentary disease" in the party: "Under the leadership of Bebel and Liebknecht the party learned to combine illegal and legal work. When the majority of the legally-existing Social-Democratic group in parliament adopted an opportunist position on the famous question of voting *for* the shipping subsidy, the illegal *Sozialdemokrat* [party organ] *opposed* the group and, after a battle four weeks long, proved victorious."[106] The parallels with the then current debates between "the six" and "the seven" were not lost on readers of *Pravda*.

If Lenin no longer had faith in the "officers' corps" of the SPD, that wasn't true when it came to the ranks of the party. Fifteen months before the Guns of August exploded, he reported with obvious pleasure on how a general meeting of the party in a constituency in Stuttgart demanded that the parliamentary fraction be unyielding in opposing armaments spending. If necessary, "mass strikes" should be employed to steel their determination. "There is slow but steady growth of awareness among German Social-Democrats that more resolute, active, mass struggle by the workers is necessary. If the opportunists, of whom there are many in the parliamentary group and among the officials of the labor movement, are opposed to such a struggle, the masses of workers accept it with greater and greater sympathy."[107]

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Belgium was also on Lenin's radar screen. The general strike in 1913 that ended with only "a partial victory" offered lessons. Why had the strike, he asked *Pravda* readers, garnered "such *little* success" in a country where "political liberty" allowed workers to "have a broad and open road before them"?—a not unimportant question for a newspaper that put the fight for a democratic republic at the center of its program. There were two reasons: "The first is the domination of opportunism and reformism in a section of the Belgian Socialists, especially those in parliament. Being accustomed to move in alliance with the Liberals, these members of parliament feel themselves dependent on the Liberals in all their activity. As a result, there was hesitation in calling the strike, and hesitation could not but limit the success, strength and scope of the whole proletarian struggle." The second, basically, is that Belgian workers lacked "a strong, highly principled and strictly party organization which is true to socialism"—what the liquidators who also followed Belgian politics "have done wrong to ignore."[108]

Lenin's increasingly critical stance toward Western European social democracy, especially their parliamentary fractions, was justified given the actions of the leadership of the Socialist International, which met in July 1914 to discuss the split in the Russian movement. The meeting was, ostensibly, to be just an airing of differences before the International's "officers' corps" to help them understand what was at issue. Lenin provided a very detailed report, drawing on data he published before, to show that "the six" actually represented the mass of Russia's workers and proposed conditions for resolving the dispute. However, he decided not to attend and explained to Inessa Armand, who was out of jail and back in exile in Western Europe, why she should go and give the report instead of him. And it wasn't just a matter that her French—the meeting would be in Paris—was better than his: "We shall calmly (I am no good for that) . . . propose our conditions in the most polite (I am no good for that either) French."[109]

Lenin upped the ante for reconciliation. As well as equality in the fraction, he demanded that "the seven" recognize the authority of the Central Committee that came out of the Prague Conference because it was more representative of the Russian working class than any group the Menshevik-liquidators had in place. Not only did the executive committee reject his proposals, as Lenin no doubt expected, but they voted, effectively—and contrary to the stated purpose of the meeting to be simply an airing of differences—that the Bolshevik Central Committee suspend itself and thus "the six" also. It appeared that Lenin suffered a defeat. But developments far more important than the meeting in Paris soon revealed that

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the Socialist International itself was the loser. It would forfeit the moral authority needed to implement their decisions.

1905 Redux?

Back in St. Petersburg, "the six" were as busy as ever—outside the walls of Tauride Palace. The class struggle that revived in 1912 intensified in the opening months of 1914. From political protests commemorating the Lena goldfields massacre and celebrating May Day to struggles against economic exploitation in some of the city's largest factories, the proletariat of the capital increasingly looked like their counterparts in the heady days of 1905. This time they had representatives in the Duma who they looked to for assistance. The aforementioned contributions that workers' groups collected and sent to the deputies for strike and other aid were especially important. Fraction members were expected to help in other ways and did so. Because the biggest and most notable strike actions took place in St. Petersburg, Badayev was probably more active than any of his comrades in the fraction. At a certain moment he was confronted by the assistant to the minister of the interior with the facts his police had been gathering on him: "You are a deputy of the State Duma, your business is to legislate—that is why you were elected—but instead you spend your time at the workshops, hatching plots, issuing leaflets and publishing a newspaper which incites its readers to criminal acts." Badayev replied, "You cannot prevent me going to the factories. A deputy elected by the workers will never confine himself to speeches in the Duma while the workers are being beaten up in your police stations."[110] Parliamentary immunity allowed Badayev such freedom—exactly why the regime would have to do what it did with the social democratic group in the Second Duma.

Within the Duma, the fraction maintained its revolutionary posture. This is why, along with "the seven" and the Trudovik deputies, it was not invited to a "secret meeting" in March of all the other fractions to discuss how to increase armaments spending—four months before the Czar declared war on Germany. "When we denounced this fresh expenditure of the people's money on armaments," writes Badayev, "we were supported by a strike of 30,000 workers."[111] To protest the infringement on their speaking rights by the Duma president when trying to defend striking workers, the three fractions decided to obstruct the debate on the government's budget—reminiscent of what they did in the First and Second Dumas. The Octobrist president responded by suspending the members of all three fractions for 15 sessions. Most significant, tens

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of thousands of workers took to the streets in not only St. Petersburg but Moscow as well to protest the suspensions. Their actions coincided with those already planned for May Day a few days later—the largest since 1905–7. In anticipation of the fate of both fractions and *Pravda*, a leading Black Hundred publication blamed the upsurge on the "agitation carried on by the workers' press and in the activity of the Social-Democratic deputies."[112]

Badayev and his comrades were not opposed to doing what the government official demanded that they should only do—"to legislate." A month before their suspension they sought to do just that. The issue was one that the second Cracow meeting recognized to be an increasingly obvious fact: "The orgy of Black-Hundred nationalism, the growth of nationalist tendencies among the liberal bourgeoisie and the growth of nationalist tendencies among the upper classes of the oppressed nationalities, give prominence at the present time to the national question." The context was the Balkan Wars and the coming "Great War." To counter "the orgy," Lenin and the Bolsheviks mounted a campaign that took varied forms. His most detailed writings to date on the national question informed a bill that the fraction tried to introduce in the Duma: "A Bill for the Abolition of All Disabilities of the Jews and of All Restrictions on the Grounds of Origin or Nationality" (see Appendix F). While "the seven" were invited to sign on, it's not clear if they did. Even with Trudovik support they would not have had the required 33 signatures to introduce the bill for debate. Nevertheless, as they had done before, the fraction utilized *Pravda* to inform its readers of its contents. As Lenin explained in his introduction, "[W]e do not look to the nationalist [Black Hundred] Fourth Duma to abolish the restrictions against the Jews and other non-Russians. But it is the duty of the working class to make its voice heard. And the voice of the *Russian* workers must be particularly loud in protest against national oppression." About the work the fraction did on the inside, Badayev made a crucial point: "Had there been no workers' Bolshevik paper, our speeches would not have been known outside the wall of the Tauride Palace"—what the regime also knew.

A week after the May Day protests, "the six" became "the five." On May 8, Roman Malinovsky submitted his resignation to the president of the Duma. He said nothing to his comrades and disappeared. Bolshevik opponents, "the seven" especially, had a field day with Malinovsky's unexplained departure. There had long been rumors and suspicions about him but never hard evidence—at least to convince Lenin. After the October Revolution, when the Bolsheviks had access to the Czar's police files, it was learned that he had indeed been on their payroll. "He betrayed,"

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Lenin revealed, "scores and scores of the best and most loyal comrades, caused them to be sentenced to penal servitude, and hastened the death of many of them."[113] And no doubt he helped stoke the factional side of the debate between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks between at least the Prague Conference and his departure. A trial in 1918 resulted in his execution at the hands of a firing squad.

Reflecting later on Malinovsky, Lenin suggested that it was not coincidental when he went missing in action. It was when the class struggle in the spring of 1914 was beginning to look like a replay of the fall of 1905. Though he had been a valuable asset for the police, it was becoming increasingly clear that the movement was getting more out of him than the regime: "I should not at all be surprised if the secret police used the following argument for Malinovsky's removal from the Duma: that Malinovsky had turned out to be too closely involved with the Duma fraction and *Pravda*, which were carrying on their *revolutionary* work among the masses much too energetically to be tolerated by the police."[114] He was objectively aiding and abetting, contrary to what he no doubt preferred, the revolutionary process. The modus operandi of the Bolsheviks made that possible: collective discussion and debate, a democratic vote, and the expectation that everyone was obligated to carry out the will of the majority—in other words, democratic centralism. Lenin, in his later reflection about Malinovsky, said that "we had a rule whereby we did not allow those to the left of us to make speeches; if a speech was somewhat to the right, it was still possible to correct it, but more leftish statements could cause great harm. Apparently Malinovsky did not always like this line of conduct; he preferred bolder illegal work"—exactly what an agent provocateur sought, a pretext for the regime to crack down on the Bolsheviks.[115] Democratic centralism also served the party well in the case of Chernomazov, the problematic editor of *Pravda* and also a police agent. Precisely because he violated discipline—one of the resolutions adopted at the second Cracow meeting—it facilitated the Central Committee's replacement of him with the more effective Kamenev.

The revolutionary upsurge that began in early 1914 continued to deepen, and both "the five" and *Pravda* were intimately involved—the reason the government decided to pull, finally, the plug on the daily. On July 8 the police raided its offices, ransacked the premises, and arrested everyone on the site. Badayev's parliamentary immunity no longer protected the paper. The closing of *Pravda* was just the first of the opposition press to meet a similar fate. "In spite of this there were no signs of slackening and the movement continued to grow during the following days until July 12. The number of strikers increased to 150,000, and on July

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9 barricades were seen in the streets of St. Petersburg. Tramcars, barrels, poles, etc., served as material for the construction of barricades which were built mainly in the Vyborg district. All traffic was interrupted and in many areas workers had complete control of the streets."[116]

Whether the July protests would have resulted in another October 1905 will never be known. On July 19, Nicholas II declared war on Germany. The patriotic fervor the announcement engendered effectively brought an end to the revolutionary upsurge—at least for a while. The Bolsheviks and their Duma fraction were now faced with new and unprecedented challenges in the history of social democracy.

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Shutting down *Pravda* was probably—in hindsight, admittedly—the prelude to Nicholas's declaration, part of a well-orchestrated plan to stifle any organized opposition to his war drive. The paper had for more than two years spoken out, unlike any other, against the imperial ambitions of the autocracy. When the Balkan Wars began as the elections for the Fourth Duma were under way, Lenin, in language to get pass the government's censors, warned *Pravda* readers to beware of the "foxes or wolves," those who claimed to be "protecting the Slavs"—exactly how the autocracy sought to cloak its intrigues for initiating the "Great War." The Bolsheviks also worked to counter the regime's domestic chauvinist offensive, a necessary ingredient in its war drive. "A Bill for the Abolition of All Disabilities of the Jews and of All Restrictions on the Grounds of Origin or Nationality," which Lenin drafted and *Pravda* publicized, was just one component in that effort. They were the lone consistent voice among party organizations to confront the march to war. Their fraction's denunciation of new spending on arms in March 1914 and the strike of 30,000 workers in support of their stance made them a more dangerous opponent. The regime also probably knew, therefore, that it would not be enough to silence the organ of the Bolshevik fraction. The fraction itself would have to be shut down.

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CHAPTER 3

THE "GREAT WAR," 1917, AND BEYOND

ARGUABLY THE MOST CONSEQUENTIAL WORK OF ANY of the four Russian Social Democratic Labor Party Duma fractions came with the onset of the First World War. The antiwar actions of the five Bolshevik deputies in the Fourth Duma were for Lenin a model for what he would begin to call communist parliamentary work. But after they were arrested and exiled to Siberia, that work ceased to occupy his attention to the degree it once had. The reason is that with the overthrow of the Romanov dynasty in February 1917, Lenin would have to spend much of his time before and after the October Revolution defending soviet governance, for him a superior form of representative democracy. By no means did this signify a change of heart about the parliamentary arena. To the contrary, he maintained to the end that in the absence of soviets communists should make use of parliaments but based on the lessons drawn and codified by the new Communist or Third International. Subsequent history revealed, however, that only a few who claimed to do politics in his name were faithful to the legacy he bequeathed.

THE DUMA FRACTION AND ANTIWAR WORK

When Nicholas II declared war on Germany on July 19, 1914 (or August 2 in the new calendar)—in response to the German Kaiser's declaration a day earlier—the only question for the Duma was what would be the response of the social democratic deputies.[1] Would they get on board the war train as had every other fraction, including the Cadets? They had long opposed the Czar's imperial ambitions and the chauvinist campaigns that enabled them, and as an affiliate of the Socialist International, the RSDLP had signed on to the much publicized Basle Manifesto of 1912 when the Balkan Wars commenced. That proclamation, standing

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on the shoulders of the antiwar resolution of the 1907 Stuttgart Congress, called on its signers to oppose militarism. If war began, their parliamentary fractions should vote against any funding and call on the proletariat in their respective countries to turn it into a civil war against their own bourgeoisies.

The Historic "Betrayal" and the Bolshevik Response

To the disbelief of every Russian social democrat, regardless of faction, the Reichstag fraction of the German party voted on August 4 to fund the war. The fateful action of the flagship party of international social democracy gave license to every other social democratic parliamentary group in Western Europe to follow suit. The Menshevik (and soon to be Bolshevik) Alexandra Kollontai was present when the vote was taken: "'I could not believe it,' she wrote in her diary that evening: 'I was convinced that either they had all gone mad, or else I had lost my mind.'"[2] Lenin, too, was apparently taken aback, despite having recently written about the creeping "disease" within the German movement. His reaction to the vote, "a feeling of the most bitter disappointment," suggests as much: "The responsibility for thus disgracing socialism falls primarily on the German Social-Democrats."[3] This wholesale "betrayal," as he and many other social democrats called it, of the basic principles of Marxism was soon recognized as a watershed in the history of the movement. For Lenin it was a teaching moment, as he explained to Kollantai at the end of the year: "The European war has brought this great benefit to international socialism, that it has exposed for all to see the utter rottenness, baseness and meanness of opportunism, thereby giving a splendid impetus to the cleansing of the working-class movement from the dung accumulated during decades of peace."[4]

How the Russian parliamentary group, both wings, would respond to the war drums now took on added significance in the aftermath of the vote of the German and other Western European parties. With the other Bolshevik fraction members out of town during the Duma's summer recess, it fell to Badayev to answer the deluge of questions from reporters working for St. Petersburg's bourgeois and monarchist press. "But what I said was altogether unsuitable for publication in their newspapers. I declared":

> The working class will oppose the war with all its force. The war is against the interests of workers. On the contrary, its edge is turned against the working class all over the world. The Basle Congress . . . in the name of the world proletariat, passed a resolution declaring that, in case of the

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> declaration of war, our duty was to wage a determined struggle against it. We, the real representatives of the working class, will fight for the slogan "War against War." Every member of our fraction will fight against the war with all the means at his disposal.[5]

If the prowar press ignored Badayev's message, the regime's police certainly did not. The two last sentences meant that from then on he and his other comrades would be under even closer surveillance.

In preparation for the reconvening of the Duma to vote on funding for the war, the Bolshevik, Menshevik-liquidator, and Trudovik deputies held discussions to see if they could come up with a joint declaration. After a number of meetings a statement was agreed on by only the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Though read at the session on July 26, Badayev reports that the Octobrist Duma president "censored it before it was printed in the stenographic report."[6] Regarding its contents, "Although our declaration did not contain a clear and precise characterization of the war or of the position of the working class and did not give a well-defined revolutionary lead, yet, when set off against the jingo background, it sounded a clear call of protest against the war madness." Badayev suggests that a joint statement with the Mensheviks required a watering down of the Bolsheviks' antiwar stance due in part to the patriotic fervor of the moment.[7] Nevertheless, the declaration and what the social democrats then did stood in sharp contrast to the rest of the Duma deliberations: "After its patriotic orgy, the State Duma proceeded to vote for the war budget. In accordance with decisions taken at all congresses of the International, our fraction refused to take part in the voting and left the hall. Our declaration and our refusal to vote war credits raised a storm of protest from the Duma majority. Deputies from all other parties, including the left Cadets and Progressives, lost their temper and attacked us in the lobbies." The walk out of all social democrats (Trudoviks as well according to other reports) was an instant cause célèbre and "soon became widely known among the workers." It initiated the Bolshevik's antiwar work, "which, under war conditions, rendered every member who was caught liable to trial by court-martial and almost certain death." Their Duma group would have to lead this campaign, because in the wake of the wholesale crackdown by the regime on the underground when the war began, it was the only Bolshevik unit that had some room to maneuver.

In consultation with what was left of the Central Committee based now in Finland, the Bolshevik fraction issued a number of antiwar proclamations: "[One] dealt with the necessity of conducting propaganda among the troops, with preparing for an armed struggle, and with the approaching revolution. Thus, the slogan of 'War against war' was

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evolving into a practical program of utilizing the war for the revolutionary struggle." The collaboration between the Bolshevik centers in St. Petersburg and Finland entailed a new and increasingly dangerous game of cat and mouse in court-martial-ruled Russia. The police assumed, rightly, that for the Bolsheviks to be able to produce and distribute their antiwar propaganda meant that the Duma deputies had to be intimately involved and that Badayev was probably the chief culprit. As one of their reports explained, "[T]hough 'the St. Petersburg Committee has ceased its activity . . . the restless youthful members of the illegal organizations are not content with their enforced inactivity and, under the influence of the Social-Democratic deputy, Badayev, have begun to issue a series of leaflets dealing with current events with the set purpose of discrediting the government's conduct of the war . . . All measures will be taken to obtain from persons arrested confessions which will prove that the deputy Badayev is engaged in revolutionary propaganda.'"[8] Again, the parliamentary immunity the deputies enjoyed—increasingly tenuous—allowed them to travel widely to do antiwar work and in the process rebuild the shattered party.

In contrast to the Bolsheviks, Western European social democrats embraced the war in the name of defending the homeland. The head of the Socialist International, Emile Vandervelde—the same individual who had only a month earlier at the Paris meeting directed the Bolsheviks to dissolve their faction, now a newly minted and proud cabinet member in Belgium's prowar government—sent a letter to the two Russian Duma fractions urging them to support the war and in effect end their antiwar stance. Not surprisingly, his appeal had no credibility with the Bolshevik deputies. It was a different story for the six Mensheviks. In his letter, Vandervelde asked the Russians to "share the common standpoint of socialist democracy in Europe." His appeal gave political cover to those Mensheviks who were looking for an opportunity to reject the position they took on July 26. After a heated debate they all did just that.[9] The five Bolsheviks were now the sole antiwar Duma fraction.

While social democratic deputies were making their stance in the Duma on July 26, Lenin, who was living in Austrian-controlled Poland—now a belligerent of Russia—was arrested and imprisoned for two weeks. Only after he and Krupskaya relocated in Switzerland was he able to reconnect with the fraction after an almost two-month hiatus. In the meantime, as well as drafting positions the Bolsheviks should take on the war, he gave public talks. In one instance a newspaper reported on his intervention at a talk that Plekhanov gave on the war in Lausanne: "Comrade Lenin . . . analyzed the duty of socialists in wartime. *Social-Democrats did their duty only when they fought chauvinist passions at home.* And the

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Serbian Social-Democrats offered the best example of such fulfilment of duty." The Serbian social democrats were the first to have opposed the war and voted against war credits.

That the Serbians offered "the best example" of a response is significant. The joint statement Badayev and the other four Bolshevik deputies entered into with the Mensheviks on July 26 came with a political price that Lenin no doubt disagreed with, especially the provision that was greeted with broad applause when read in the nearly unanimous prowar Duma: "The proletariat, which is the constant defender of the freedom and interests of the people, will at all times defend the cultural wealth of the nation against any attack from whatever quarter."[10] For Lenin, this smacked of Western European social democracy's "defending the homeland" excuse for supporting the war. Thus his proposal on October 17 to the Central Committee member, based in Stockholm, who was in direct contact with the fraction: "[O]ur group should make a statement independent of the bloc, and should set forth a *consistent* point of view."[11] The declaration of "the bloc," as Badayev later admitted, "did not contain a clear and precise characterization of the war or of the position of the working class and did not give a well-defined revolutionary lead." In contrast to the July 26 declaration, the Bolshevik deputies' rejection of Vandervelde's entreaties to get on board the war train, a response that was published in *Sotsial-Demokrat*, appears to have had input from Lenin.[12]

LENIN'S THESES ON THE WAR

About a month after the war began, Lenin formulated a set of theses, positions the Bolsheviks should take, and submitted them for discussion and debate. A major factor in the "betrayal of socialism" by the Western European social democratic parties was due to their "making a fetish of the necessary utilization of bourgeois parliamentarism and bourgeois legality, and forgetting that illegal forms of organization and agitation are imperative at times of crises."[13] Nothing in the remaining theses was really new, and they were consistent with what Badayev told the press in the now renamed Petrograd ("St. Petersburg" sounded too German for the regime's chauvinist campaign) except for the sentence in the sixth thesis: "From the viewpoint of the working class and the toiling masses of all the peoples of Russia, the defeat of the tsarist monarchy and its army, which oppress Poland, the Ukraine, and many other peoples of Russia, and foment hatred among the peoples so as to increase Great-Russian oppression of the other nationalities, and consolidate the reactionary and barbarous government of the tsar's monarchy, would be the lesser evil by

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far."[14] That the Bolsheviks should welcome a defeat of the Czar's armies was a position that many of Lenin's comrades, especially those in Russia, found difficult to embrace. It was not the easiest stance, "revolutionary defeatism," as it came to be known—in contrast to the "defensist" position of most social democrats—to take in the midst of the patriotic fervor sweeping the country in the early days of the war.[15] Both the regime and opponents like the Cadets seized on the sentence to try to discredit the Bolsheviks and isolate them politically.

A close reading of Lenin's controversial thesis suggests that it was informed by his understanding of the national question and proletarian internationalism—the dialectic between the two. It was consistent, he argued, with "the fundamental truth of socialism, long ago set forth in the *Communist Manifesto*, that the workingmen have no country." The working class of the oppressor nation had to bend over backward to prove its proletarian internationalism, especially in time of war. Lenin assumed that the oppressed nations in the Romanov's oft-called "prison house of nations" would have the least problem with "revolutionary defeatism." A victory for the monarchy would only strengthen its ability to suppress them. And winning the oppressed nations was crucial in the formation of a revolutionary majority. This interpretation of Lenin's position is given added credence by the way in which he formulated in the seventh thesis his now familiar three slogans for Russia's bourgeois democratic revolution: "a struggle against the tsarist monarchy and Great-Russian, Pan-Slavist chauvinism, and advocacy of a revolution in Russia, as well as of the liberation of and self-determination for nationalities oppressed by Russia, coupled with the immediate slogans of a democratic republic, the confiscation of the landed estates, and an eight-hour working day."

With the Central Committee in exile in agreement, Lenin then submitted his theses to the Bolshevik Duma deputies in order that they organize—since they were the only party unit in a position to do so—a more representative meeting to debate and discuss them in order that they become official party policy. The long-existent Bolshevik practice of making collective decisions even under the very arduous conditions of court-martial-ruled Russia made such a meeting possible. In their updated version, "The War and Russian Social-Democracy," he praised the fraction for its stance on July 26—his reservations about the joint statement with the Mensheviks notwithstanding:

> Our Party, the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, has made, and will continue to make great sacrifices in connection with the war. The whole of our working-class legal press has been suppressed. Most working-class associations have been disbanded, and a large number of our comrades

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> have been arrested and exiled. Yet our parliamentary representatives—the Russian Social-Democratic Labor group in the Duma—considered it their imperative socialist duty not to vote for the war credits, and even to walk out of the Duma, so as to express their protest the more energetically; they considered it their duty to brand the European governments' policy as imperialist. Though the tsar's government has increased its tyranny tenfold, the Social-Democratic workers of Russia are already publishing their first illegal manifestos against the war, thus doing their duty to democracy and to the International.[16]

After taking as many precautions as possible, the five Bolshevik deputies held a secret meeting on the outskirts of Petrograd in early November with seven party delegates from various locales—elected in meetings that the deputies helped organize—who had successfully eluded very tight police surveillance. Kamenev, who represented the Central Committee, joined them from Finland. The main agenda item, Lenin's theses, was taken up on the second day of the conference, and according to Badayev, "no objections were raised to the principles outlined, although certain formal amendments were suggested . . . But before the conference could complete its work, the police broke into the room and arrested everyone present."[17] "This is terrible," Lenin said upon hearing the news. "We must be ready for the very worst: falsification of documents, forgeries, planting of 'evidence,' false witnesses, trial behind closed doors, etc., etc. . . . At all events, the work of our Party has now become 100 times more difficult. And still we shall carry it on! *Pravda* has trained up thousands of class-conscious workers out of whom, in spite of all difficulties, a new collective of leaders—the Russian C.C. of the Party—will be formed . . . Times are difficult, but . . . we shall get through!"[18]

"A Model of Revolutionary Parliamentarism": The Trial of the Bolshevik Deputies

Lenin's fears about the fallout from the arrests of the deputies, Kamenev, and the others were warranted. The government's second public announcement about the arrest of the five Bolshevik deputies said they were attending a conference that "was engaged in discussing a resolution which stated that 'the least evil is the defeat of the tsarist autocracy and its army' and in which the slogan was advanced 'to carry on as widely as possible among the troops propaganda for a socialist revolution' and 'the organization of illegal cells in the army.'"[19] As well as Lenin's theses, the police confiscated other incriminating evidence, the most damaging being the records of Martei Muranov, the deputy who represented the

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workers in Kharkov province. They detailed how he used his Duma post to do illegal work. The regime now had the smoking gun it had been looking for to deprive the Bolsheviks of their parliamentary immunity and put them on trial for violating martial law. The Petrograd party committee issued a leaflet denouncing the arrests of the five deputies and called on workers to stage protest meetings and one-day strikes. Despite massive steps the government took to prevent that from happening, a few actions did take place. But it was clear the patriotic offensive had sapped the revolutionary energy in place only a few months earlier. As the leaflet put it, "The war and the state of martial law has enabled the government to carry out their attack on the workers' deputies, who were so valiantly defending the interests of the proletariat."

To the surprise of the five arrestees, they learned that they would not be tried by court martial, which would have meant the death penalty, but in an ordinary court. Nicholas, himself, made the decision. He did so, the fraction felt, because by the time the trial was to take place, early 1915, the patriotic wave was beginning to ebb as setbacks on the battlefields began to mount and the workers' movement was beginning to recover. "The government could no longer count on the news of the punishment of the workers' deputies being received with patriotic shouts of joy." At the same time, the Black Hundred progovernment press, as the trial date approached, sought to paint the Bolshevik deputies in the worst possible light from a chauvinist/patriotic perspective. A frequent complaint was their failure to follow the example of their Western European counterparts when the Great War began:

> These unworthy bearers of a high title . . . played into the hands of Germany so obviously that there can be no question of any innocent error on their part while acting in conformity with the pernicious teaching of Socialism. Socialists exist in other countries too, but everywhere, in England, France and Belgium, the moment the war was declared, they renounced their internal struggles and joined the national ranks against the formidable enemy, German militarism.
>
> Even German Socialists renounced their Utopias for the duration of the war and are behaving like their bourgeois friends. It is only to Russian workers that the honorable Duma Socialists give their advice to act on theories of non-resistance to evil, peace at any price, etc., and it is only Russian Socialists who attempt to stir up internal disorders in war time.

As the trial drew nearer, Bolshevik organizations, against enormous odds, issued leaflets and organized workplace meetings to counter the slander campaign. The leaflet on the eve of the trial declared, "Comrades!

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It is the working class which is in the dock, represented by deputies who were elected by the workers and who have acted in complete agreement with the workers . . . Strike on February 10, arrange meetings and demonstrations, protest against the tsarist mockery of the working class." While the stranglehold the regime still held on Russia prevented any large-scale protests, millions of workers now knew about the Bolshevik deputies and their politics, particularly their antiwar stances, owing to the pro and counter campaigns.

The trial itself was, as Lenin predicted, orchestrated and offered no surprises. The chief prosecutor repeated, for example, the complaint that the Bolshevik deputies hadn't acted like their namesakes in Western Europe by having "'voted for war credits and proved to be friends of the government.'" The regime also "took steps to suppress any speeches and evidence which might be used for agitational purpose. The military censorship ruthlessly cut out whole passages from the reports of the trial."[20] However, in order to make its case, the government inadvertently exposed, as Lenin put it, "a model of . . . *revolutionary* Social Democracy making use of parliamentarism." Exhibit A was the testimony of Muranov, who, rather than disowning his notes that the police had seized, took the proverbial bull by the horns: "'Realizing that the people did not return me to the Duma just to warm my seat there, I travelled about the country to ascertain the mood of the working class.' He admitted that he had undertaken the functions of a secret agitator of our Party, that in the Urals he organized workers' committees at the Verkhneisetsky Works, and elsewhere."[21] The trial "'uncovered' only a fraction of the activities our comrades were conducting in this field." Other fraction members "travelled, for propaganda purposes, throughout almost the whole of Russia and . . . Muranov, Petrovsky, Badayev and others arranged numerous workers' meetings, at which anti-war resolutions were passed, and so on."

Lenin admitted that some fraction members, in an effort to escape the possibility of capital punishment, had not acquitted themselves as principled as had Muranov—"who at the trial behaved better than the rest"[22]—and that opponents were trying to use that fact to impugn the integrity of Bolshevik politics. They were trying to obscure the real issue at stake: how to make use of the parliamentary arena. As opposed to the

> European (i.e. servile) "socialist" parliamentarism . . . there are different kinds of parliamentarism . . . Some utilize the parliamentary arena in order to win the favor of their governments, or, at best, to wash their hands of everything, like the Chkheidze [Menshevik] group. Others utilize parliamentarism in order to remain revolutionary to the end, to perform their duty as Socialists and internationalists even under the most difficult

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> circumstances. The parliamentary activities of some bring them into ministerial seats; the parliamentary activities of others bring them—to prison, to exile, to penal servitude. Some serve the bourgeoisie, others—the proletariat. Some are social-imperialists. Others are revolutionary Marxists.[23]

There was an even more significant dimension about the proceedings, Lenin argued: "Thanks to the trial, the words cited in the indictment: 'The guns should be directed, not against our brothers, the wage slaves of other countries, but against the reactionary and bourgeois governments and parties of all countries'—these words will spread—and have already done so—all over Russia as a call for proletarian internationalism, for the proletarian revolution. Thanks to the trial, the class slogan of the vanguard of the workers of Russia has reached the masses of the workers."[24] The trial and its coverage in the press did more to publicize the antiwar stance of the Bolsheviks than anything prior to then. A few months afterward, Lenin, most prophetically, wrote, "We cannot tell whether a powerful revolutionary movement will develop immediately after this war, or during it, etc., but at all events, it is only work in this direction that deserves the name of socialist work. The slogan of a civil war is the one that summarizes and directs this work, and helps unite and consolidate those who wish to aid the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat against its own government and its own bourgeoisie."[25] Not surprisingly, the five Bolsheviks were found guilty and sentenced to hard labor in Siberia. But unlike that of their comrades in the Second Duma, their stay in the Czar's prisons would be of shorter duration—exactly because the Great War began to develop into a civil war.

Without a Duma fraction, Lenin sought out any remaining legal space. Just such an opportunity arose when the government agreed to allow workers in the war industries to elect in the fall of 1915 representatives to committees established by the capitalist owners. Precisely because this was a thinly veiled attempt to get workers on board the war train that was increasingly unpopular by pretending that they would have some say so in the actual management of the industries, it opened a debate among the opposition about whether to participate. This was not unlike the debates about the elections for the First and Second Dumas—to boycott or not. The monarchy, in fact, had just prorogued the Fourth Duma because of increasing criticism of its conduct of the war by the Octobrists and other parties. Given the growing revival of the revolutionary process, the regime needed to improve its public image.

Based on "advice from comrades in Russia," Lenin made the following proposal: "We are opposed to participation in the war industries committees, which help prosecute the imperialist and reactionary war. We are in

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favor of utilizing the election campaign; for instance, we are for participation in the first stage of the elections for the *sole* purpose of agitation and organization." And to be clear about what was and was not being proposed, he added, "There can be no talk of boycotting the Duma. Participation in the second ballot is *essential*. While we have no Duma deputies from our Party, we must utilize everything that happens in the Duma so as to advance the aims of revolutionary Social-Democracy."[26] Even Nicholas's suspension of the Fourth Duma could not dissuade Lenin from utilizing it whenever it resumed.

True to their word, the Bolsheviks used the elections to the war industries committees to campaign against the war. After the first round of the elections, their resolution that called for a boycott of the committees and a revolutionary solution to the war garnered more delegate support than that of the Menshevik-liquidators. Since they chose not to participate in the second round of the process—demanded by the bosses, who didn't like the outcome of the first round—the Menshevik position to participate in the committees prevailed. But the overall balance sheet fell far short of what the bourgeoisie wanted: "As a result of Bolshevik propaganda, elections to the 'workers' groups' [for the committees] were held in only 70 areas out of a total of 239, and workers representatives were actually elected only in 36 areas."[27]

Along with the proposal to participate in the elections to the war industries committees, Lenin addressed in "Several Theses" two related issues that had been raised in the discussion inside Russia—both of which would soon be at the center of his politics. One concerned the demand for a constituent assembly:

> The slogan of a "constituent assembly" is wrong as an independent slogan, because the question now is: who will convene it? The liberals accepted that slogan in 1905 because it could have been interpreted as meaning that a "constituent assembly" would be convened by the tsar and would be in agreement with him. The most correct slogans are the "three pillars" (a democratic republic, confiscation of the landed estates and an eight-hour working day), with the addition (cf. No. 9) of a call for the workers' international solidarity in the struggle for socialism and the revolutionary overthrow of the belligerent governments, and against the war.

As had always been the case for Lenin, the demand for a constituent assembly depended on the context—the objective tasks and pace of the movement.

The other issue, the all-important question of 1917, was posed because some Bolsheviks thought that the elections to the war industries

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committees opened up the possibility for such a demand. Lenin demurred: "Soviets of Workers' Deputies and similar institutions must be regarded as organs of insurrection, of revolutionary rule. It is only in connection with the development of a mass political strike and with an insurrection, and in the measure of the latter's preparedness, development and success that such institutions can be of lasting value."[28]

A constituent assembly or soviet government? No debate would dominate the political discourse in 1917 (when insurrectionary conditions did unfold) and afterward as much as this question. Lenin's theses of 1915, informed by all that he had said before, anticipated the stances he would take in that debate.

Lenin's ninth thesis, the one he drew attention to, is also worth noting, because it made clear that his revolutionary defeatist stance was applicable not just to a Czarist government: "If the revolutionary chauvinists won in Russia, we would be opposed to a defense of *their* 'fatherland' in the present war. Our slogan is: against the chauvinists, even if they are revolutionary and republican *against* them, and for an alliance of the international proletariat *for* the socialist revolution." Even if the Romanov dynasty were overthrown, the Bolsheviks would continue to call for a defeat of Russia's armies if the new regime pursued an imperialist course without the titular leadership of Nicholas. They proved to be true to their word.

To appreciate what the Bolsheviks lost with the arrests of their five comrades, consider Lenin's anxious letter in October 1916 to his primary contact, based in Sweden, with the Russian movement, A. G. Shlyapnikov: "The most pressing question now is the weakness of contacts between us and leading workers in Russia!! No correspondence!! . . . We can't go on like that. We *cannot* organize either the publication of leaflets or transport, either agreement about manifestos or sending over their drafts, etc., etc., without *regular* secret correspondence. That is the key question! . . . Two-thirds of the contacts, as a minimum, in each city, should be with leading *workers*, i.e., they should *write* themselves, *themselves* master secret correspondence (artists are made, not born), should themselves each train up 1–2 'heirs' in case of arrest. This should not be entrusted to the intelligentsia alone. Certainly not. It can and must be done by the leading workers. Without this it is *impossible* to establish continuity and purpose in our work—and that is the main thing."[29] A year later, exactly, the situation would be far different—owing in large part to what the Duma fraction had been able to accomplish before being exiled to Siberia.

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"REVOLUTIONARY PARLIAMENTARISM" FOR A NEW INTERNATIONAL

Lenin's aforementioned points about "different kinds of parliamentarism" came in a document, *Socialism and War*—Zinoviev was coauthor—for what would be the founding meeting of the Communist or Third International, the famous Zimmerwald Conference of 1915. For the minority of European social democrats who saw the vote for war credits by the majority of Second International parties as a betrayal of the historic Marxist program, only one conclusion could be drawn—a new international had to be constructed. The pressing agenda item for the 38 delegates from 11 European countries who gathered in the small Swiss town that September was how to respond, in contrast to most social democrats, to the war in a revolutionary way. In the process they addressed other programmatic issues, and for Lenin none was as important as clarity on the Marxist approach to doing electoral and parliamentary work. After all, he contended—already noted in his first pronouncement on the war—a major factor in the "betrayal of socialism" by Western European social democracy was due to their "making a fetish of the necessary utilization of bourgeois parliamentarism and bourgeois legality, and forgetting that illegal forms of organization and agitation are imperative at times of crises."

Shortly before writing *Socialism and War*, Lenin, in preparing for the Zimmerwald meeting, offered a more detailed examination of the "betrayal" in his *The Collapse of the Second International*. Legality at any price, he argued, exemplified by the German party, doomed most social democratic parties. Once the war began, the "initiation of revolutionary activities would obviously have led to the dissolution of these legal organizations by the police, and the old party—from Legien [the German party leader whose trip to the United States earned, as noted in Chapter 2, Lenin's ire] to Kautsky inclusively—sacrificed the revolutionary aims of the proletariat for the sake of preserving the present legal organizations. No matter how much this may be denied, it is a fact. The proletariat's right to revolution was sold for a mess of pottage—organizations permitted by the present police law." Employing the tactics of warfare as an analogy, Lenin proposed, beginning hypothetically, an alternative, revolutionary course for the electoral and parliamentary arenas:

> Today there is no revolutionary situation, the conditions that cause unrest among the masses or heighten their activities do not exist; today you are given a ballot paper—take it, learn to organize so as to use it as a weapon against your enemies, not as a means of getting cushy legislative jobs for men who cling to their parliamentary seats for fear of having to go to prison. Tomorrow your ballot paper is taken from you and you are given a rifle or a splendid and most up-to-date quick-firing gun—take this weapon

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> of death and destruction, pay no heed to the mawkish snivelers who are afraid of war; too much still remains in the world that *must* be destroyed with fire and sword for the emancipation of the working class; if anger and desperation grow among the masses, if a revolutionary situation arises, prepare to create new organizations and *use* these useful weapons of death and destruction *against* your *own* government and your *own* bourgeoisie . . . This form of the class struggle stands in the same relation to participation in elections as an assault against a fortress stands in relation to maneuvering, marches, or lying in the trenches. It *is not so often* that history places this form of struggle on the order of the day, but then its significance is felt for decades to come. *Days* on which *such* method of struggle can and must be employed are equal to *scores of years* of other historical epochs.

While Lenin's perspective about the necessity of illegal work was clearly informed by the Russian experience, he didn't limit it to such settings where political space was severely circumscribed: "Not only in wartime but positively in any acute political situation, to say nothing of periods of revolutionary mass action of any kind, the governments of even the *freest* bourgeois countries will threaten to dissolve the legal organizations, seize their funds, arrest their leaders, and threaten other 'practical consequences' of the same kind. What are we to do then? Justify the opportunists on these grounds, as Kautsky does? But this would mean sanctifying the transformation of the social democratic parties into national liberal-labour parties." The government of one of the "freest bourgeois countries" proved Lenin right three years later when it jailed Socialist Party of America leader Eugene V. Debs for his antiwar stance. Twenty six years later, followers of Lenin in Minneapolis, Minnesota, witnessed the "arrest of their leaders" because of their opposition to the Roosevelt administration's war drive—a half year before Pearl Harbor![30]

The war, Lenin contended, had demonstrated that "pure legalism, the legalism-and-nothing-but-legalism of the 'European' parties, is now obsolete and, as a result of the development of capitalism in the pre-imperialist stage, has become the foundation for a bourgeois labor policy. It must be augmented by the creation of an illegal basis, an illegal organization, illegal Social-Democratic work, without, however, surrendering a single legal position." And there was no better example, he argued, of how to combine the two than what the five Bolshevik deputies had done: "Muranov, the workers' deputy in the Duma, who at the trial behaved better than the rest and was exiled to Siberia, clearly demonstrated that—besides '*ministeriable*' parliamentarism . . . there can be *illegal and revolutionary* parliamentarism. Let the Kosovskys and Potresovs [Mensheviks] admire the 'European' parliamentarism of the lackeys or accept it—we shall not tire

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of telling the workers that such legalism, *such* Social-Democracy of the Legien, Kautsky . . . brand, deserves nothing but contempt."[31]

For the follow-up meeting to the Zimmerwald conference, eight months later in 1916, Lenin submitted, in the name of the Central Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, eight proposals for discussion. Most relevant is, first, an excerpt from the third: "Socialists do not refuse to fight for reform. Even now, for example, they must vote in parliament for improvements, however slight, in the condition of the masses, for increased relief to the inhabitants of the devastated areas, for the lessening of national oppression, etc. But it is sheer bourgeois *deception* to preach reforms as a solution for problems for which history and the actual political situation demand revolutionary solutions." Again, there's nothing here that Lenin had not already stated in one form or another for at least two decades. Its significance is that it was put forward as part of a campaign to win other forces, this time outside of Russia, to it and the other proposals as part of building a new international movement.

That was also the case with the seventh proposal, which in many ways was a reiteration of what he raised at the earlier meeting but with added political content:

> On the question of socialist parliamentary action, it must be born in mind that the Zimmerwald resolution not only expresses sympathy for the five Social-Democratic deputies in the State Duma, who belong to our Party, and who have been *sentenced* to exile to Siberia, but also expresses its solidarity with their tactics. It is impossible to recognize the revolutionary struggle of the masses while resting content with exclusively legal socialist activity in parliament. This can only arouse legitimate dissatisfaction among the workers, cause them to desert Social-Democracy for anti-parliamentary anarchism or syndicalism. It must be stated clearly and publicly that Social-Democratic members of parliament must use their *position* not only to make speeches in parliament, but also to render all possible aid outside parliament to the underground organization and the revolutionary struggle of the workers, and that *the* masses themselves, through their illegal organization, must supervise these activities of their leaders.[32]

Lenin's point, made not for the first time, that social democratic opportunism in the electoral arena and the reformism it bred—again, for Lenin fighting for reforms was not to be confused with reformism—gave "anti-parliamentary anarchism or syndicalism" a hearing has as much currency today as it did then. Witness the various global examples of the recent "occupation" movement in which anarcho-syndicalists were influential if

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not always hegemonic. Exactly because of the "betrayal" of modern-day social democracy could they appear as a credible working-class alternative.

Finally, there are Lenin's (seldom appreciated) pronouncements based on his direct involvement in working-class politics in one of, as he put it, "the *freest* bourgeois" countries in the world—Switzerland. Forced exile, for two and a half years, allowed him to generalize his electoral/parliamentary political strategy and tactics beyond absolutist Russia.[33] His "Tasks of the Left Zimmerwaldists in the Swiss Social-Democratic Party," written in October–November 1916, is most instructive. As the title suggests, Lenin was a leader of the most revolutionary current within the party and sought to win the majority to its course with the document. Among the many proposals that addressed not only the war but domestic matters as well were those under the heading, "Pressing Democratic Reforms and Utilization of the Political Struggle and Parliamentarism":

> 16. Utilization of the Parliamentary tribune and the right of initiative and referendum, not in a reformist manner, in order to advocate reforms "acceptable" to the bourgeoisie, and therefore powerless to remove the principal and fundamental evils suffered by the masses . . .
> 17. Abolition of *all* restrictions without exception on the political rights of women compared with those of men . . .
> 18. Compulsory naturalization . . . of all foreigners, free of charge . . . The disfranchisement and alienation of foreign workers serve to increase political reaction, which is already mounting, and weaken international proletarian solidarity . . .
> 19. Immediate propaganda for Social Democratic candidates in the 1917 Nationalrat [National Council] elections to be nominated only on the basis of a political platform that has been previously widely discussed by the electors.[34]

Further on in the document he specified what he meant by utilizing the parliamentary space in a nonreformist manner. Regarding the proposal for political equality for women, whether it was Lenin who first raised this demand in the Swiss party is uncertain, but it was not until 1971 that women gained the right to vote in Switzerland. In Russia, on the other hand, suffrage for women was one of the first acts of the new Bolshevik-led government. Last, he included a proposal on greater accountability and democratic functioning in the Swiss party.

In hindsight, all these documents, especially the platform for the Swiss party, constitute Lenin's initial drafting of what would eventually become the norms of communist electoral and parliamentary work wherever branches of the new international existed.

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FROM FEBRUARY TO OCTOBER

Though Lenin declared, in a public lecture in Switzerland on January 9, 1917 (the twelfth anniversary of the beginning of the 1905 revolution), that "Europe is pregnant with revolution," he did not realize how soon the baby would arrive.[35] Long before, however, he correctly anticipated the way it would: "[I]t is quite possible, and historically much more probable," he wrote in 1901, "that the autocracy will collapse under the impact of one of the spontaneous outbursts or unforeseen political complications which constantly threaten it from all sides. But no political party that wishes to avoid adventurous gambles can base its activities on the anticipation of such outbursts and complications. We must go our own way, and we must steadfastly carry on our regular work, and the less our reliance on the unexpected, the less the chance of our being caught unawares by any 'historic turns.'" The fact is that he was "caught unawares" when the February Revolution began, but precisely because of having gone their "own way" and done "regular work" could he and the Bolsheviks quickly rebound, get their revolutionary feet, and eventually be victorious. The focus here cannot for obvious reasons be the richness of the transition from the February to the October Revolution but how, in a distilled presentation, the decadelong Duma experience informed Lenin's strategy and tactics for the Bolshevik ascent to power.

"SOVIETS OF WORKERS' DEPUTIES MUST BE ORGANIZED"

With the abdication of Nicholas II on March 2, a provisional government composed of various opposition forces in the Fourth Duma was instituted. Lenin, who was still in exile, reacted critically to one of its first proclamations:

> In its manifesto, the new government promises every kind of freedom, but has failed in its direct and unconditional duty immediately to implement such freedoms as election of officers, etc., by the soldiers, elections to the St. Petersburg, Moscow and other City Councils on a basis of genuinely universal, and not merely male, suffrage, make all government and public buildings available for public meetings, appoint elections to all local institutions and Zemstvos, likewise on the basis of genuinely universal suffrage, repeal all restrictions on the rights of local government bodies, dismiss all officials appointed to supervise local government bodies, introduce not only freedom of religion, but also freedom from religion, immediately separate the school from the church and free it of control by government officials, etc. . . . Soviets of Workers' Deputies must be organized, the workers must be armed. Proletarian organizations must be extended to the army

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> (which the new government has likewise promised political rights) and to the rural areas. In particular there must be a separate class organization for farm laborers.[36]

Lenin's proposals were consistent with the historical program of the RSDLP and all that he'd been advocating about the electoral process and representative democracy for at least a decade. With necessary adjustments, they came to constitute the core of what he would struggle for in the next eight months.

Shortly afterward, Lenin addressed another issue that figured significantly in Russia's political debates for the next ten months. To one of the first group of Bolsheviks returning to Russia after the February Revolution, he responded to a request about the tactics they should pursue: "[N]o trust in and no support of the new government; Kerensky is especially suspect; arming of the proletariat is the only guarantee; immediate elections to the Petrograd City Council; no rapprochement with other parties." Because press reports contributed some confusion about his telegrammed advice, he clarified with a letter. First, what he sent was written "in the name of the Central Committee members *living abroad*, not in the name of the Central Committee itself." Second, and more important, "[r]eference is not to the Constituent Assembly, but to elections to *municipal* bodies. Elections to the Constituent Assembly are, so far, merely an empty promise. Elections to the Petrograd City Council could and should be held *immediately*, if the government is really capable of introducing its promised freedoms. These elections could help the proletariat organize and strengthen its revolutionary positions."[37] If Lenin had reservations about the constituent assembly—which he voiced, as already noted, in 1915—he harbored no qualms about plunging back into the electoral arena. For him it was mostly about picking up from where the Bolsheviks had left off before the arrest of their deputies in November 1914 and for the same reasons—to advance the revolution.

Prior to his return to Petrograd, Lenin penned his now famous "Letters from Afar," in which he outlined his vision for the next stage in Russia's revolution. Especially relevant were his comments on the Soviet of Workers' Deputies formed in Petrograd—a reflection, he said, of the lessons of 1905 and the Paris Commune. That it was "drawing in *soldiers*' deputies, and, undoubtedly deputies from rural *wage*-workers, and then (in one form or another) from the entire peasant poor" was most encouraging. The inclusion of the soldiers' deputies gave license to say that the Soviet comprised "*over 1,500* deputies of workers and peasants dressed in soldiers' uniform." "The prime and most important task, and one that brooks no delay, is to set up organizations of this kind in all parts of

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Russia without exception, for all trades and strata of the proletarian and semi-proletarian population without exception . . . I shall mention that for the entire mass of the peasantry our Party . . . should especially recommend Soviets of wage-workers and Soviets of small tillers who do not sell grain, to be formed *separately* from the well-to-do peasants." Just as Lenin strove to use the Dumas to construct the worker-peasant alliance, he was now advocating that the soviets be the vehicle for doing that—a far more democratic representative body, akin to the Paris Commune.

Of crucial importance for the effectiveness of the soviets, he emphasized, was the organization of a "genuine *people's* militia, i.e., one that, first, consists of the *entire* population, of all adult citizens of *both* sexes; and, second, one that combines the functions of a people's army with police functions, with the functions of the chief and fundamental organ of public order and public administration." He underscored the necessity of including women in the militias: "If women are not drawn into public service, into the militia, into political life, if women are not torn out of their stupefying house and kitchen environment, it will be *impossible* to guarantee real freedom, it will be *impossible* to build even democracy let alone socialism." Organizing the soviets and their militias on this basis pointed the way forward to the replacement of the old state apparatus with a new one needed for the "transition from that first stage of the revolution to the second."[38] Again, the lessons of the Commune figured significantly in his vision, and thus, as he explained elsewhere, the soviets were "the harbinger of the 'withering away' of the state *in every form*."[39]

"NOT A PARLIAMENTARY REPUBLIC"

Lenin's task, once he returned to Russia, was to win the rest of the Bolshevik leadership to his perspective. Except for Kollantai, most of them, as once before, displayed conciliationist tendencies, this time toward the provisional government. Within hours of his arrival in Petrograd on April 3, he delivered what has come to be called his "April Theses" and had them published in the now resurrected *Pravda*. After addressing in the first of the ten theses the war question, he turned to, in the next four, the "basic question of every revolution," as he later put it: "state power."

> 2) The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that the country is *passing* from the first stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organization of the proletariat, placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie—to its *second stage*, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants.
> 3) No support for the Provisional Government . . .

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4) Recognition of the fact that in most of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies our Party is in a minority . . . As long as we are in the minority we carry on the work of criticizing and exposing errors and at the same time we preach the necessity of transferring the entire state power to the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, so that the people may overcome their mistakes by experience.
5) Not a parliamentary republic—to return to a parliamentary republic from the Soviets of Workers' Deputies would be a retrograde step—but a republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Laborers' and Peasants' Deputies throughout the country, from top to bottom.

As for the future, "It is not our *immediate* task to 'introduce' socialism, but only to bring social production and the distribution of products at once under the *control* of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies." Last, "I argued that *without* the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies the convocation of the Constituent Assembly is not guaranteed and its success is impossible."[40]

Lenin's objection to "a parliamentary republic" did not in the least signify a retreat from his long-standing advocacy for representative democracy. To the contrary, he reaffirmed that stance by arguing that soviets, an increasing reality as a result of the February events, were a superior form of such democracy because of the way in which they were created and their modus operandi. His other well-known article of that period, "The Dual Power," distilled what he considered to be their model:

> *This* power is of *the same type* as the Paris Commune[41] of 1871. The fundamental characteristics of this type are: (1) the source of power is not a law previously discussed and enacted by parliament, but the direct initiative of the people from below, in their local areas—direct "seizure," to use a current expression; (2) the replacement of the police and the army, which are institutions divorced from the people and set against the people, by the direct arming of the whole people; order in the state under such a power is maintained by the armed workers and peasants *themselves*, by the armed people *themselves*; (3) officialdom, the bureaucracy, are either similarly replaced by the direct rule of the people themselves or at least placed under special control; they not only become elected officials, but are also *subject to recall* at the people's first demand; they are reduced to the position of simple agents; from a privileged group holding "*jobs*" remunerated on a high, bourgeois scale, they become workers of a special "arm of the service," whose remuneration *does not exceed* the ordinary pay of a competent worker.[42]

No better concise description of the Commune exists in the annals of Marxism—the product of two decades of research, writing, and lecturing

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on the topic. In the subsequent debate with Kamenev and other Bolsheviks in defense of his theses, Lenin was even clearer: "The parliamentary bourgeois republic hampers and stifles the independent political life of the masses, their direct participation in the democratic organization of the life of the state from the bottom up. The opposite is the case with the Soviets."[43] The oft-made claim, then, that Lenin lacked a democratic vision—and thus the Stalinist outcome of the Bolshevik revolution—is groundless.

In calling for the transference of power from the provisional government to the soviets, Lenin, Kamenev charged, was abandoning the more than decade-long Bolshevik demand for the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry—its virtue being a strategy for winning the majority to Russia's bourgeois democratic revolution. Lenin disagreed and pedagogically explained why: "The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has already been realized, but in a highly original manner, and with a number of extremely important modifications." It had been realized, Lenin contended, in the form of the soviets. But rather than take power, they, specifically the soviet in Petrograd, ceded it to the bourgeois provisional government. The tasks for "communists"—the label Lenin increasingly employed in place of the now soiled "social democracy"—was to convince the soviets to take power for themselves. "As long as we are in the minority," as the fourth thesis put it, "'patient' explaining" was necessary to win "the majority of the deputies in all (or in most) Soviets" to the view that the provisional government did not serve the interest of Russia's producers.[44]

The Central Committee made clear in a resolution adopted on April 22 that the Bolsheviks were not demanding immediate transference of power to the soviets despite such calls at a protest two days earlier against the provisional government:

> The slogan "Down with the Provisional Government!" is an incorrect one at the present moment because, in the absence of a solid (i.e., a class-conscious and organized) majority of the people on the side of the revolutionary proletariat, such a slogan is either an empty phrase, or, objectively, amounts to attempts of an adventurist character.
>
> We shall favor the transfer of power to the proletarians and semi-proletarians only when the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies adopt our policy and are willing to take the power into their own hands.[45]

Again, "patient explanation" to win the majority of the soviets to transference was the immediate task—exactly the tactic Lenin advised for the

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RSDLP fractions in the four Dumas from 1906 to 1914 to convince the Trudovik peasant deputies to break with the Cadet liberals in order to forge the worker-peasant alliance. That experience—unappreciated until now—plus the force of argument, the betrayals of the provisional government, and the greater democratic space that existed after February ensured that Lenin's strategy would prove successful this time.

Soviet rule didn't mean opposition to republican government. But it meant something quite different from a "'parliamentary' republic":

> The people need a republic in order to educate the masses in the methods of democracy. We need *not only* representation along democratic lines, but the building of the entire state administration from the bottom up by the masses themselves, their effective participation in all of life's steps, their active role in the administration. *Replacement* of the old organs of oppression, the police, the bureaucracy, the standing army, by a universal arming of the people, by a really universal militia, is the only way to guarantee the country a maximum of security against the restoration of the monarchy and to *enable* it to go forward firmly, systematically and resolutely towards socialism, not by "introducing" it from above, but by raising the vast mass of proletarians and semi-proletarians to the art of state administration, to the use of the *whole* state power.[46]

A month after Lenin's return, Trotsky arrived in Petrograd, also from a more than decadelong exile. "I arranged with Comrade Kamenev"—his brother-in-law, by the way—"for a visit to the editorial office of *Pravda* on one of the first days after my arrival. The first meeting must have taken place on the 5th or 6th of May. I told Lenin that nothing separated me from his April theses and from the whole course that the party had taken since his arrival."[47] Three weeks later Lenin referred to him as "Comrade Trotsky."[48] The two had been bitter opponents since 1903 when Trotsky accused Lenin of being a Jacobinist—the debut of that timeworn charge—or, more condescendingly, "a *caricature* of Robespierre."[49] Three months before their meeting Lenin called him a "swine" for not aligning with the Left Zimmerwaldists.[50] It speaks volumes about the two of them and their politics that all that was now water under the bridge—arguably the most consequential reconciliation in the annals of politics.[51] From either "the 5th or 6th of May" 1917, both, until the ends of their lives, saw themselves as comrades in struggle.

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"ALL POWER TO THE SOVIETS"

To bring the entire Bolshevik party on board to Lenin's theses required a delegated party meeting. The weeklong Seventh All-Russia Conference in April was the first legal Bolshevik gathering in Russia, with 133 voting delegates representing 80,000 members and 18 with voice—the most representative to date. The "freest of all the belligerent countries in the world," as Lenin called post-February Russia, made that possible. Also attending the conference were the five Fourth Duma deputies and the surviving ones from the Second Duma, freed from Nicholas's Siberian prisons.

The conference discussion around the soviets is of special relevance. Lenin ended the opening report on the current situation with the "what is to be done" question: "The Soviets must take power not for the purpose of building an ordinary bourgeois republic, nor for the purpose of making a direct transition to socialism. This cannot be. What, then, is the purpose? The Soviets must take power in order to make the first concrete steps towards this transition, steps that can and should be made . . . We cannot be for 'introducing' socialism—this would be the height of absurdity. We must preach socialism. The majority of the population in Russia are peasants, small farmers who can have no idea of socialism."[52] Despite what was achieved in February, Lenin was as sober as he had always been about what was and was not on the political agenda in Russia.

In the resolution on the soviets themselves, Lenin could be more specific:

> This growth of the revolution in the provinces in depth and scope is, on the one hand, the growth of a movement for transferring all power to the Soviets and putting the workers and peasants themselves in control of production. On the other hand, it serves as a guarantee for the build-up of forces, on a national scale, for the second stage of the revolution, which must transfer all state power to the Soviets or to other organs directly expressing the will of the majority of the nation (organs of local self-government, the Constituent Assembly, etc.) . . .
>
> It is, therefore, the task of the proletarian party, on the one hand, to support in every possible way the indicated development of the revolution locally, and, on the other to conduct a systematic struggle within the Soviets (by means of propaganda and new elections) for the triumph of the proletarian line.
>
> The Conference repeats that it is necessary to carry out many-sided activity within the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, to increase the number of Soviets, to consolidate their power, and to weld together our Party's proletarian internationalist groups within the Soviets.[53]

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The resolution on the current situation, after five days of discussion and debate, composed by Lenin, concluded that the soviets could carry out practical work to deal with the real needs of the masses, "only when an overwhelming majority of the people has clearly and firmly realized the practical need for them; on the other hand their character guarantees that the reforms will not be sponsored by the police and officials, but will be carried out by way of voluntary participation of the organized and armed masses of the proletariat and peasantry in the management of their own affairs . . . Great care and discretion should be exercised in carrying out the above measures; a solid majority of the population must be won over and this majority must be clearly convinced of the country's practical preparedness for any particular measure."[54] For Lenin, again for the umpteenth time, "only when an overwhelming majority of the people" came on board could the revolutionary project go forward, this time via the soviets. In the May 15 issue of *Pravda*, Lenin raised publicly for the first time the slogan, *"All power to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies! No confidence in the government of the capitalist!"*[55] The context makes clear that he did so for purposes of propaganda and not agitation—that is, to persuade rather than, at this time, to incite.

To underscore that the peasantry was still crucial in his equation for winning the majority to soviet governance, ten days later Lenin addressed a letter to the First All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Deputies representing their recently created soviets throughout the country. While it was indisputable that "Russia must become a democratic republic," the Bolshevik party, "the party of class-conscious workers and poor peasants, is . . . working for a democratic republic of another kind"—different from what the "majority of landowners and capitalists" wanted:

> We want a republic where there is no police that browbeats the people; where all officials, from the bottom up, are elective and displaceable whenever the people demand it, and are paid salaries not higher than the wages of a competent worker; where all army officers are similarly elective and where the standing army separated from the people and subordinated to classes alien to the people is replaced by the universally armed people, by a people's militia.
>
> We want a republic where all state power, from the bottom up, belongs wholly and exclusively to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and other Deputies.
>
> The workers and peasants are the majority of the population. The power must belong to them, not to the landowners or the capitalists.
>
> The workers and peasants are the majority of the population. The power and the functions of administration must belong to *their Soviets*, not to the bureaucracy.[56]

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A week later at the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, attended by more than a thousand delegates of whom the Bolsheviks and their allies comprised about 20 percent, Lenin reiterated his case for the need to transfer power to the soviets, despite the fact that there were now "near-socialist Ministers" such as Alexander Kerensky, a Socialist Revolutionary, in the provisional government. But this time he made what would be his constant refrain until October on why it was so necessary to do so. Only if the soviets took power, he implored the delegates, would the most pressing question confronting not just the producing classes in Russia but those elsewhere affected by the Guns of August be resolved—the war. As long as the soviets, the real power in Russia, conceded to the government of capitalists and landlords, the beneficiaries of the conflagration, the slaughter would continue. "Peace without annexations and indemnities"—that was the Bolshevik solution and what a government dominated by capitalists and landlords could never deliver. Because the latter had "a majority in the government the war will remain an imperialist war no matter what you write, no matter how eloquent you are, no matter how many near-socialist Ministers you have." But unlike anywhere else in the world, Russia, owing to the events of February, produced an institution, the soviets, that had the ability to implement a real working-class peace policy: "The Soviets are an institution which does not exist in any ordinary bourgeois-parliamentary state and cannot exist side by side with a bourgeois government. They are the new, more democratic type of state which we in our Party resolutions call a peasant-proletarian democratic republic."

> Only one country in the world can at the moment take steps to stop the imperialist war on a class scale, in the face of the capitalists and without a bloody revolution. Only one country can do it, and that country is Russia. And she will remain the only one as long as the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies exists . . . If you were to take power into your hands, if power were to pass to the revolutionary organizations to be used for combating the Russian capitalists, then the working people of some countries would believe you and you could propose peace.[57]

When a provisional government minister declared at the congress that the soviets couldn't take power because there was no party in them that was prepared to rule, Lenin famously replied—to both applause and laughter—"Yes, there is. No party can refuse this, and our Party certainly doesn't. It is ready to take over full power at any moment."

In a demonstration on June 18 that the Menshevik-Socialist Revolutionary leadership of the Petrograd soviet called to rally support for itself,

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"most of the 400,000 marchers who came out did so under" the Bolshevik banner of "All Power to the Soviets," much to the embarrassment of the former.[58] Three weeks later on July 4, a half million did the same in an action the Bolsheviks called to protest the provisional government's latest and unsuccessful battlefield offensive. In defending the demonstration and slogan, Lenin summarized what had transpired since the toppling of the Romanov dynasty:

> During the several months that have passed since February 27 the will of the majority of the workers and peasants, of the overwhelming majority of the country's population, has become clear in more than a general sense. Their will has found expression in mass organizations—the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.
>
> How, then, can anyone oppose the transfer of all power in the state to the Soviets? Such opposition means nothing but renouncing democracy! It means no more no less than imposing on the people a government which *admittedly* can neither come into being nor hold its ground *democratically*, i.e., as a result of truly free, truly popular elections.[59]

Lenin defended the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" through to and after October, except for a moment beginning in mid-July. The context was the "July Days" when in response to the July 4 actions the provisional government went on a counterrevolutionary offensive.[60] Not only was *Pravda* shut down, but Bolshevik leaders like Trotsky were arrested while others like Lenin had to go into hiding. The authorities were aided and abetted in this by the Socialist Revolutionary-Menshevik leadership of the soviets. On the run, Lenin wrote, "The slogan 'All Power to the Soviets!' was a slogan for peaceful development of the revolution which was possible in April, May, June, and up to July 5–9, i.e., up to the time when actual power passed into the hands of the military dictatorship. This slogan is no longer correct, for it does not take into account that power has changed hands and that the revolution has in fact been completely betrayed by the S.R.s and Mensheviks."[61] As long as the soviets advanced the democratic process—that is, the revolution—they were to be supported. But once they had become an obstacle, that support, he now argued, should be denied—the same reasoning that informed his opposition to the Bulygin Duma in the Revolution of 1905. Also, Lenin never made an organizational fetish about soviets—one of his earlier differences with Trotsky.[62] Their appropriateness depended on the context of the class struggle. After debate and discussion, an overwhelming majority of the delegates to the party's semiclandestine Sixth Congress at the end

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of July, which Lenin didn't attend because he was in hiding, agreed with his argument.

By the beginning of September, however, when the revolution was on the offensive again, the Bolsheviks reembraced the slogan. Lenin made a "compromise" proposal to the Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary leadership: "The compromise on our part is our return to the pre-July demand of all power to the Soviets and a government of S.R.s and Mensheviks responsible to the Soviets." The Bolsheviks "would refrain from demanding the immediate transfer of power to the proletariat and the poor peasants and from employing revolutionary methods of fighting for this demand." In exchange they would have "complete freedom of propaganda and the convocation of the Constituent Assembly without further delays or even at an earlier date." Freedom to conduct propaganda, which also meant the unbanning of *Pravda*, went hand in hand with, parenthetically, "new elections" for the soviets: "The Bolsheviks would gain the opportunity of quite freely advocating their views and of trying to win influence in the Soviets under a really complete democracy . . . Under a Soviet government, such freedom would be *possible* . . . *We* have nothing to fear from real democracy, for reality is on our side, and even the course of development of trends within the S.R. and Menshevik parties, which are hostile to us, proves us right."[63] Lenin's calculus proved accurate. The "new elections" to the soviets confirmed his prediction. As Trotsky put it about the new situation, seven weeks before the October Revolution, "the cry raised at the very beginning of the revolution by our party—'All Power to the Soviets!'—has become the voice of the whole revolutionary country."[64]

Elections and Electoral Norms

Except for a one-page party resolution, there are no sustained discussions in Lenin's published corpus between February and October on elections, the tactics and strategy of campaigning, and related matters similar to what he produced in the run ups to the four Dumas.[65] What does exist, however, makes certain that all he had done in the electoral arena before was as valid for him, if not more, in the heady days of 1917. New this time in post-February Russia, with implications for his electoral strategy, was ample political space.

The Fourth or State Duma was reconvened after the dethronement of Nicholas, but the fact that it figures only in passing in Lenin's narrative testifies to its importance or lack thereof after February. His position had always been, going back to 1905, that soviets should be prioritized because

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they offered the greater possibility for genuine democratic governance—exactly what opened up with February. The aforementioned "truly free, truly popular elections" were indeed those to the soviets.

The election campaigns for the four State Dumas were always for Lenin an invaluable opportunity to educate workers on the differences between political parties—an experience that served him well for 1917. If there was one thing that characterized post-Nicholas Russia, it was the ubiquity of elections—this time not only to soviets but to local dumas as well. Immediately upon his return to Petrograd, he composed a piece of literature for mass distribution that resembled the leaflet he produced for the elections to the Second Duma in 1906 in which he laid out in three columns the differences between the Black Hundreds, the Cadets, and the social democrats (see Appendix C in the first volume, *LES1905*). The new piece appeared as articles intended for a leaflet but became a pamphlet for the July 4 demonstration. It retained the question/answer format but this time with answers for four categories of parties: "Parties and groups to the right of the Constitutional Democrats," the "Constitutional Democrats and kindred groups," the "Social-Democrats, the Socialist Revolutionaries and kindred groups," and, last, "Bolsheviks, the party which properly should be called the *Communist Party*."

Of significance here are the Bolshevik answers to three questions. As for what form of government they wanted, "A republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and other Deputies. Abolition of the standing army and the police, who are to be replaced by the arming of the whole people; officials to be not only elective, but also displaceable; their pay not to exceed that of a competent worker." If the elective principle applied to government officials, shouldn't soldiers be able to elect their officers? "Not only must they be elected, but every step of every officer and general must be supervised by persons specially elected for the purpose by the soldiers." And if civilians could displace government officials, shouldn't soldiers enjoy the same right? "It is desirable and essential in every way. The soldiers will obey and *respect* only elected authorities."[66] Whether Lenin's pamphlet impacted soldiers is uncertain. It may have helped to generalize practices that were already in place as mounting losses on the battlefield sparked increasing rank-and-file resistance to the commands of officers. What is known is that Bolshevik success in October was due in large part to the support they enjoyed among soldiers and sailors, and the promise of democracy and the elective principle—what no other party put in writing—no doubt made them attractive.

In many ways the pamphlet was a stand-in for a new party program. The old one, based on a unified Russian Social Democratic Labor Party

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and a pre-February 1917 political reality, needed revisions. Some months later, authorized by delegated party meetings, Lenin began to put together a draft. A number of innovations are of import. He expanded on the elective principle in his pamphlet by first making clear that soviet governance was now the goal of the party: "[P]arliamentary representative institutions will be gradually replaced by Soviets of people's representatives (from various classes and professions, or from various localities), functioning as both legislative and executive bodies." Under soviet democracy, and to be enshrined in a future constitution,

> supreme power in the state must be vested entirely in the people's representatives, who shall be elected by the people and be subject to recall at any time, and who shall constitute a single popular assembly, a single chamber . . . proportional representation at all elections; all delegates and elected officials, without exception, to be subject to recall at any time upon the decision of a majority of their electors . . . Judges and other officials, both civil and military, to be elected by the people with the right to recall any of them at any time by decision of a majority of their electors . . . Public education to be administered by democratically elected organs of local self-government . . . teachers to be elected directly by the population with the right of the latter to remove undesirable teachers.[67]

There is no mention in the draft party program, unlike in his pamphlet, of the elective principle for soldiers, no doubt because the "police and standing army," as stated, were "to be replaced by the universally armed people."

At the end of May the 12 districts of Petrograd held elections for their respective dumas. The appearance of Lenin's soon-to-be pamphlet was most timely. At the party's delegated City Conference in the third week in April, a debate took place on how the Bolsheviks should conduct themselves in the elections. A key issue concerned the character of the parties in contention and the related one of electoral blocs. The struggle, he argued, was between three party groupings, Cadets and parties to their right, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks who defended the war, and the Bolsheviks. Unlike the elections for the four State Dumas, proportional representation would be employed for those to the municipal dumas. There was, therefore, he proposed, "no need for a bloc"—that is, electoral blocs that the RSDLP sometimes entered into under the prior electoral rules; now "the minority is protected." Nevertheless, "I am decidedly in favor of placing on our tickets the names of the Menshevik candidates who are breaking with chauvinism. This is no bloc." His resolution that embodied these positions along with the basic stance that

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"under no circumstances can the municipal platform, particularly at the present revolutionary time, be reduced only to communal questions" was adopted—Lenin's only published writing explicitly devoted to electoral policy between February and October (see Appendix G).

As the Petrograd elections were about to take place, Lenin pointed to "two shortcomings in our Party organization and Party work." They concerned the Bolsheviks' list of candidates for one of the wealthiest districts in the city:

> Our list for Liteiny District has only 33 candidates as against the 63 of the Cadets and the Menshevik bloc . . . Apparently, our Party workers have not been able to find more than 33 candidates of the proletarian party in this wealthy district. But this is an obvious shortcoming in our work, an obvious indication that we have not gone down far enough into the midst of the working and exploited people. We must break with established custom. In the wealthy districts we must "go among the people" more energetically than ever, and waken more and more strata of the working and exploited people to political consciousness. We should get the non-party proletarian elements—especially the *domestic servants* for instance—to take an active part in the elections and not hesitate to put the most reliable of them into our proletarian list. Why should we fear a minority of non-party *proletarian* elements, when the majority are class-conscious internationalist proletarians?[68]

This admonition is most revealing because it suggests that while the published account of Lenin's activities during 1917 is relatively sparse regarding his input into Bolshevik electoral activities for that year, he was still as much the hands-on campaign organizer, strategist, and taskmaster as he'd been for the elections for the four State Dumas. And the call to recruit "domestic servants" is even more telling but entirely consistent with everything he'd advocated and done before. "Comrade workers!" he urged in a *Pravda* article on the eve of the elections, "Let us all get down to work, canvassing all the poorest homes, awakening and enlightening the domestic servants, the most backward workers, etc., etc."[69]

A few months later, elections to the Petrograd City Duma took place. William Rosenberg provides the most detailed account in English.[70] Of significance are the gains the Bolsheviks made over the prior elections, a 14 percent improvement, which foreshadowed their future fortunes. Given all that was at stake in the aftermath of the "July Days," the party went into full campaign mode, not only in Petrograd but in Moscow—where they increased their vote by 40 percent—and other locations where local duma elections were to take place. Keep in mind that this was the

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moment when the Bolsheviks were having second thoughts about the soviets as the best vehicle for democracy from below. If the soviets were in doubt, then local dumas (or, more specifically, the elections to them) would allow the party to measure what Engels had once said made elections so valuable for the revolutionary process and that Lenin knew all too well: the mood of the masses for the employment of armed struggle. In fact, and crucial evidence for one of the arguments of this book, subsequent memoirs say they regarded their gains "not only as a means of 'taking the revolutionary temperature of the masses,' but also as a potential aid in seizing power."[71] To recall Engels's formulation in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and State*: "On the day the thermometer of universal suffrage registers boiling point among the workers, both they and the capitalists will know where they stand." A month after the counterrevolutionary offensive and two months before the October Revolution, such readings of public sentiment were more than ever needed.

Of tremendous assistance to the Bolshevik campaigns was the startup of two party newspapers, *Proletary* and *Soldat*, in place of the banned *Pravda*. The Bolsheviks, as they could do for the State Duma elections, were now able to disseminate their program on a mass scale. Very reminiscent of the campaign literature Lenin had once written was the appeal to voters in three issues of *Proletary*: "Every worker, peasant, and soldier must vote for our list because only our party is struggling staunchly and bravely against the raging counterrevolutionary dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and large landowners. [Only our party] is fighting the reimposition of capital punishment, the destruction of worker and soldier organizations, and the suppression of all the freedoms won with the blood and sweat of the people. You must vote for our party because it alone is struggling bravely with the peasantry against large landowners, with workers against factory owners, with the oppressed everywhere against the oppressors."[72] This appeal and all the details of the campaign—the importance of Rosenberg's account—make it hard to believe that Lenin (who, again, was on the run, probably why the extant paper trail is so incomplete) was not the orchestrator and largely responsible for what was achieved. After all, no Bolshevik knew more about how to conduct an effective and successful election campaign.

The best circumstantial evidence is provided by Krupskaya. After returning to Petrograd, "my work at the secretariat bored me more and more," she wrote.

> I wanted to get into real mass work. I also wanted to see Ilyich [Lenin] more often . . . The district Duma elections took place in June. I went to Vasilevsky Island to see what progress was being made in the election

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> campaign . . . The elections to the district Dumas were over. I was elected to the Vyborg district council. The only candidates to be elected to this council were Bolsheviks and a few Menshevik-Internationalists . . . I learned a great deal from the work in the Vyborg district. It was a good school for Party and Soviet work. During the many years that I had lived abroad as a political exile, I never dared to make a speech even at a small meeting, and until that time I had never written a single line in *Pravda*. I needed such a school very much.[73]

Krupskaya's education speaks volumes about what was opened for the Bolsheviks with the new opportunity for "mass work" through the local duma elections. Again, it's highly unlikely that Lenin wasn't intimately involved with her new and more fulfilling political life.

More decisive than the elections to the local dumas, however, as history would show, were those to the soviets. From the time of his return to Petrograd, Lenin recognized their importance. When the aforementioned crisis in April revealed that the leadership of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was becoming an obstacle to the revolution, he called "upon all the workers and soldiers . . . to send as delegates to the [soviet] only such comrades who express the will of the majority. In all cases where a delegate does not express the opinion of the majority, new elections should be held in the factories and the barracks."[74] Unlike for the local dumas, elections to the soviets were more frequent and included the right of recall, the details of which, however, are not captured in the extant published Lenin corpus. A decisive turning point in the revolution came in July when the Bolsheviks—who, in Trotsky's words, "occupied a wholly insignificant sector" of the workers' section of the Soviet in April—now constituted "two thirds of its members" as a result of by-elections in the factories. "That meant that among the masses their influence had become decisive."[75]

Yet Lenin objected to the rules of representation in the Petrograd Soviet as new elections to it approached at the end of August. That "the soldiers have one representative to every 500 people, while the workers have 1:1000" was, he charged, a violation of democracy. "'One representative, everywhere, to an *equal* number of electors' is the ABC of democracy. Anything else is a *fraud*." He urged the party to pass

> a resolution demanding *equal* suffrage (both in the Soviets and at trade union congresses), branding the *slightest* departure from equality as a *fraud*—using exactly this word—as *a Nicholas II method*. This resolution of the plenary meeting of the Central Committee must be written in a language everybody can understand and spread in leaflet form among the mass of the workers.

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> We cannot tolerate a *fraud* of democracy if we call ourselves "democrats." We are not democrats but unprincipled people if we tolerate this!![76]

That the soviet failed to change its rules, owing mainly to Socialist Revolutionary opposition to Lenin's proposal, doesn't negate his democratic vision for how it should function. Despite this setback the Bolsheviks achieved a major victory in the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets on August 31 and September 5, respectively, when an overwhelming majority of delegates in both bodies passed their motions calling for a rejection of any compromises with the bourgeoisie and the transfer of "All Power to the Soviets!"—testimony to the deepening of the revolutionary process. About this moment, Trotsky writes, "The city dumas, which had made an effort to compete with the soviets, died down in the days of danger and vanished. The Petrograd duma humbly sent its delegation to the Soviet 'for an explanation of the general situation and the establishment of contact.'"[77]

The elective principle, last, applied to the party itself. Telling evidence that it was in full force after the February Revolution came in a comment Lenin made about the April 20 protest against the provisional government. Called for and organized by the Bolsheviks, the action went "a trifle more to the left" than planned, "a serious crime"—a problem of "disorganization" that had to be corrected. "Had we deliberately allowed such an act, we would not have remained in the Central Committee for one moment."[78] Lenin and other Central Committee members, in other words, would have been immediately recalled. Years of having to operate without elections did not dull Bolshevik sensibility for their need when the opportunity presented itself.

On the Eve of October

For more than a year, Lenin had been thinking about and working on what would be his last major writing before assuming the responsibilities that came with the October Revolution. *State and Revolution: The Marxist Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution*, as the subtitle suggests, brought together in one text what he had been saying on the topic for some time, of urgent necessity given the likely course of events in Russia at the end of the summer of 1917—a document that could theoretically inform the process even if he couldn't live to see its outcome.

The six-page section, "Abolition of Parliamentarism," which immediately follows a detailed discussion on the Paris Commune, is relevant here. There is nothing fundamentally new in his critique of parliamentarism

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that Lenin hadn't said before. Different this time was the way he framed the issue. The betrayal by the "practical socialists" of the basic lesson Marx and Engels had drawn about the Commune, that the working class cannot use parliamentary governance for socialist transformation, came with a political price—aside from the slaughter their fateful votes on August 4, 1914, enabled. By defanging Marx and Engels, they "have left all criticism of parliamentarism to the anarchists, and, on this wonderfully reasonable ground, they [the 'practical socialists'] denounce all criticism of parliamentarism as 'anarchism'!! It is not surprising that the proletariat of the 'advanced' parliamentary countries, disgusted with such 'socialists' . . . has been with increasing frequency giving its sympathies to anarcho-syndicalism, in spite of the fact that the latter is merely the twin brother of opportunism." If this sounds descriptive of politics since the onset of the world capitalist crisis in 2008 where social democracy, the "practical socialists," has been hegemonic, then it is.

But Marx, Lenin contended, did what the "present-day traitor to socialism" could not. He "knew how to break with anarchism ruthlessly for its inability to make use even of the 'pigsty' of bourgeois parliamentarism, especially when the situation was obviously not revolutionary; but at the same time he knew how to subject parliamentarism to genuinely revolutionary proletarian criticism." And it was the Commune, the living class struggle—what the producers had discovered on their own without, as Lenin was fond of saying, "the aid of any books"—that offered an alternative. Because of the actuality of socialist revolution in Russia in August 1917, he began to consider the implications of the Commune experience, his first concretization of what a socialist society would look like.

Important here is Lenin's continued defense of representative democracy, despite the betrayals of "the present-day 'Social-Democrat'":

> The way out of parliamentarism is not, of course, the abolition of representative institutions and the elective principle, but the conversion of the representative institutions from talking shops into "working" bodies. "The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time." . . . We cannot imagine democracy, even proletarian democracy, without representative institutions, but we can and must imagine democracy without parliamentarism, if criticism of bourgeois society is not mere words for us, if the desire to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie is our earnest and sincere desire, and not a mere "election" cry for catching workers' votes.[79]

All this, once again, was consistent with what he had been saying for at least two decades. His views were informed not only by the reality of the

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Russian revolution from 1905 but, again, by the opportunity to live and do political work in what was widely regarded as a paragon of parliamentary democracy—Switzerland. About the two experiences, Krupskaya writes, "It seems to me that had Ilyich not lived through the 1905 revolution and the second period in exile, he would not have been able to write his book, *State and Revolution*."[80]

What is apparently odd about this part of the text, especially since Lenin says in the preface that he'd address the lessons of 1905 to 1917, is the absence of any positive mention of the soviets, organs that he'd once lauded for their Commune-like characteristics. But there's no mystery. As he explained three months later about what was missing, "I had no time to write a single line of the chapter; I was 'interrupted' by a political crisis—the eve of the October revolution of 1917. Such an 'interruption' can only be welcomed . . . It is more pleasant and useful to go through the 'experience of revolution' than to write about it."[81]

Certainly, from the "July Days" until early September, Lenin and the Bolsheviks had doubts about the soviets as institutions of representative democracy to advance the interests of the proletariat—exactly when he was completing his book. But that skepticism soon evaporated. Again, in the first week of September, Lenin's enthusiasm for the soviets, having performed heroically in beating back the counterrevolution, was rekindled. But the demand "Power to the Soviets," as he warned at the end of September, had to be acted on: "Either all power goes to the Soviets and the army is made fully democratic, or another Kornilov affair occurs"—that is, another attempt at a counterrevolution.[82]

The debate among Bolsheviks in the lead-up to the October Revolution was whether they enjoyed sufficient support for leading an armed overthrow of the provisional government—an insurrection. Lenin, in the minority (Trotsky was the Central Committee member closest to his views on this) insisted that there was: "The Bolsheviks, having obtained a majority in the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in both capitals, can and *must* take state power into their own hands . . . The majority gained in the Soviets of the metropolitan cities *resulted* from the people coming over *to our side*. . . Compare the elections to the city councils of Petrograd and Moscow with the elections to the Soviets. Compare the elections in Moscow with the Moscow strike of August 12. Those are objective facts regarding that majority of revolutionary elements that are leading the people."[83] For Lenin, again, elections were an invaluable tool for calculating the probability of success for the most important election, the masses voting with their feet—their willingness and ability to not only take power but defend it. Note the qualifier, the "majority of

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revolutionary elements that are leading the people"—those he regarded to be the most effective voters with their feet.

It's useful to recall his point made in 1913 about the elections to the Fourth Duma, because they, too, supplied "*objective data*. . . The struggle of parties—in practice, before the electorate, and with the returns summed up—invariably furnishes data *serving to test* our conception of the balance of the social forces in the country and of the significance of particular 'slogans.'" He reiterated this point about the value of elections five months after the October Revolution in the context of a debate about the prospects for a Bolshevik-like revolution in Germany: "As matters stood in October, we had made a precise calculation of the mass forces. We not only thought, we *knew* with certainty, from the experience of the mass elections to the Soviets, that the overwhelming majority of the workers and soldiers had already come over to our side in September and in early October. We knew . . . that the coalition [government] had also lost the support of the peasantry—and that meant that our cause had already won."[84]

The Socialist Revolutionary-Menshevik leadership of the executive of the soviet convened in mid-September the "Democratic Conference," which was basically an attempt to divert the energy boiling from below and increasingly led by the Bolsheviks into the parliamentary arena. Lenin urged the party's leadership not to be enticed: "It would be a big mistake, sheer parliamentary cretinism on our part, if we were to regard the Democratic Conference as a parliament; for even if it were to proclaim itself a permanent and sovereign parliament of the revolution, it would nevertheless *decide nothing*. The power of decision lies *outside* it in the working-class quarters of Petrograd and Moscow."[85] Consistent with all the lessons Marx and Engels had drawn about 1848 and the experiences of Russia's own revolution, Lenin explained in anticipation of Russia's future "civil war" and its outcome why what was "outside" the electoral and parliamentary arenas was more important: "A comparison of the data on the 'parliamentary' [local duma] elections and the data on the . . . mass movements [since April 20] fully corroborates, in respect of Russia, an observation often made in the West, namely, that the revolutionary proletariat is incomparably *stronger* in the *extra-parliamentary* than in the parliamentary struggle, as far as influencing the *masses* and drawing them into the struggle is concerned."[86] When Lenin decided that the Bolsheviks should boycott the conference, he drew on "the elements that went into shaping the correct tactics of boycotting the Bulygin Duma" in 1905 and the "incorrect" ones of "boycotting the Third Duma" in 1907.[87]

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After delays and postponements, the provisional government finally set a date for elections to the Constituent Assembly: November 12. Having insisted for months that they be held, the Bolsheviks immediately made preparations to take part. Ever vigilant about a proletarian approach to the electoral process, however, Lenin criticized the composition of the list the Central Committee put together. There were two problems. First, more workers, "four or five times more," needed to be included, because in what would be an overwhelmingly "peasant Constituent Assembly . . . they alone are capable of establishing close and intimate ties with the peasant deputies." The second and related problem had to do with the political histories of many on the list: "It is absolutely inadmissible also to have an excessive number of candidates from among people who have but recently joined our Party and have not yet been tested . . . In filling the list with such candidates who should first have worked in the Party for months and months, the C.C. has thrown wide open the door for careerists who scramble for seats in the Constituent Assembly."

Lenin immediately made clear his intentions: "It goes without saying that from among the mezhraiontsi [members of the Inter-District Organization, the party that Trotsky had belonged to from 1913] who have been hardly tested in proletarian work in our Party's *spirit*, no one would contest the candidature of, say, Trotsky, for, first, upon his arrival, Trotsky at once took up an internationalist stand; second, he worked among the mezhraiontsi for a merger; third, in the difficult July days he proved himself equal to the task and a loyal supporter of the party of the revolutionary proletariat. Clearly, as much cannot be said about many of the new Party members entered on the list." About one of the latter, he said it would have been fine to include him if, like Trotsky, he had displayed "a desire to reform" his previous views. "But to get him into the Constituent Assembly within a week or so of his entry into the Party is *in fact* to transform the Party into the same kind of dirty stall for careerists as most of the European parties are."

Going into the Constituent Assembly required conscious party direction: "The serious work in the Constituent Assembly will consist in establishing close, intimate *ties* with the peasants. Only workers who are in touch with peasant life are fit for this. To pack the Constituent Assembly with orators and writers is to take the beaten track of opportunism and chauvinism."[88] Just as he had devoted innumerable hours to providing direction to the RSDLP deputies in the four State Dumas for forging the worker-peasant alliance as well as other tasks, Lenin envisioned Bolshevik participation in the Constituent Assembly for doing the same. No other

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party member had thought as long and hard about realizing this goal via the parliamentary arena nor had the experience for doing so.

That Trotsky was already on the list and that Lenin endorsed him in the way he did is especially instructive about the internal norms of the Bolsheviks. It was at the aforementioned semiclandestine Sixth Congress of the party at the end of July that Trotsky was not only formally admitted to the Bolshevik party but voted onto its Central Committee, while he was in jail and Lenin in hiding. The vote tally itself is revealing. The top four vote getters in descending order were Lenin, 133 of 134; Zinoviev, 132; Kamenev, 131; and Trotsky, 131. Despite a more than decade-long bitter dispute between him and Lenin and other Bolsheviks, all that, again, was now water under the bridge. Indicative of what happened to the Bolshevik party after Lenin was dead is that Trotsky's name continued to be omitted in the *Lenin Collected Works* in the list of those elected to the Central Committee. And only in the fifth Russian edition did Lenin's endorsement of him appear for the first time.[89]

The relative ease with which the revolution was carried out on October 25, marked by the absence of any real defense of the provisional government and thus minimum bloodshed, especially in Petrograd, offers convincing evidence that Lenin was indeed right that the effective majority of the population—those willing to vote with their feet—would support the insurrection. And nothing was as important in his calculus as the results of the various elections that preceded it.

Five years before October, Lenin came across letters Marx wrote, in the heat of the Paris Commune uprising, to a one-time acquaintance who charged that the insurgents were mistaken to have gone into revolt. To appreciate Marx's response, know that six months prior to the insurgency he counseled the Paris working class against doing just that; they lacked a leadership and sufficient allies to be victorious. But did Marx, Lenin asked, rain on the revolt once it began? "No. On April 12, 1871, Marx writes an *enthusiastic* letter to [Ludwig] Kugelmann—a letter which we would like to see hung in the home of every Russian Social-Democrat and of every literate Russian worker . . . when he saw the mass movement of the people, he watched it with the keen attention of a participant in great events marking a step forward in the historic revolutionary movement . . . The *historical initiative* of the masses was what Marx prized above everything else . . . Marx knew how to warn the *leaders* against a premature rising. But his attitude towards the heaven-storming *proletariat* was that of a practical adviser, of a participant in the *struggle* of the masses, who were raising the *whole* movement to *a higher level* in spite of the false theories and mistakes of [Louis] Blanqui and [Joseph] Proudhon."

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Lenin then turned to Marx's critique of Kuglemann's "doubts" about the Communards, "referring to the hopelessness of the struggle and to realism as opposed to romanticism": "Marx immediately (April 17, 1871) severely lectured Kugelmann. '*World history*,' he wrote, '*would indeed be very easy to make, if the struggle were taken up only on condition of infallibly favorable chances* [Lenin's italics].' He realized that to attempt in advance to calculate the chances *with complete accuracy* would be quackery or hopeless pedantry. What he valued *above everything else* was that the working class heroically and self-sacrificingly took the initiative in *making* world history. Marx regarded world history from the standpoint of those who *make* it without being in a position to calculate the chances *infallibly* beforehand, and not from the standpoint of an intellectual philistine who moralizes: 'It was easy to foresee . . . they should not have taken up' . . . Marx was also able to appreciate that there are moments in history when a desperate struggle of the *masses*, even for a hopeless cause, is *essential* for the further schooling of these masses and their training for the *next* struggle."[90] Nothing presaged Lenin's course in fall 1917 as did these lines.

AFTER OCTOBER

Among Lenin's many tasks as leader of the new Russian state was the distillation of the lessons of the revolution. The newly founded Communist International, Comintern, or Third International, was just the venue for their discussion and dissemination. Not the least important of those lessons was how the Bolsheviks utilized the electoral and parliamentary arenas to take power. Two documents proved to be his definitive and final pronouncements on the topic. What happened to those lessons was inextricably linked to the fate of the revolution that unfolded within a few years of his death.

IN DEFENSE OF REVOLUTIONARY PARLIAMENTARISM

The central debate in 1917 about which form of representative democracy would prevail, soviet or parliamentary democracy—a proxy for the more fundamental issue, which class would rule Russia—was settled in January 1918. The day after the Bolshevik-led insurrection, the Second Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, where the Bolsheviks had a majority, took ownership of what had been done in its name. The era of soviet governance, commencing with a coalition of the Bolsheviks and Left Socialist Revolutionaries, had begun. As Lenin had always said, only with the workers and peasants in power would the convening of the Constituent Assembly be ensured. Elections for it finally began on November

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12.[91] The Socialist Revolutionaries garnered the largest number of votes in the country as a whole while in Petrograd and environs the Bolsheviks were the clear winner. Lenin argued that because the Socialist Revolutionary lists were drawn up before the party split into a right and left wing the votes they got did not reflect actual popular will. The situation could only be rectified if voters had the right to recall elected deputies whose politics they disagreed with. The Central Executive Committee of the Soviets issued such a decree, setting the stage for the inevitable clash over which was the supreme political authority in Russia, the soviets or the Constituent Assembly. When the latter convened on January 5, the committee demanded that it recognize the hegemony of the soviets. Its failure to do so prompted Lenin the next day to call for its dissolution, which is exactly what the committee voted to do and what in fact occurred.

When Kerensky and Kornilov threatened to end soviet power in July and August of 1917, workers and peasants came to its defense, the prelude, in hindsight, to the October Revolution. But when soviet power threatened the just-born Constituent Assembly, no comparable class force voted with its feet to be its savior. Its brief moment in the sun ended unceremoniously on January 6. The difference speaks volumes about which of the two institutions of representative democracy enjoyed effective majority support. A similar point can be made about the outcome of the civil war that got under way soon afterward. Lenin, as noted already, anticipated such a conflagration and correctly predicted, based on the election data, the eventual defeat of the counterrevolution. Once soviet power was in place after October, he could be even more confident about his forecast. Because one of its first acts was to fulfill the Bolshevik pledge to grant land to poor peasants, it ensured support for soviet governance from Russia's largest constituency. Exactly because it was soviet power and not the long-delayed Constituent Assembly that made the decree is why the peasantry came to its defense in the most critical moment in the young revolution's existence and ensured its victory in the civil war.[92]

The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly required Lenin to defend soviet governance against critics such as Kautsky. His speech to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets on January 6 that called for its demise went to the heart of his argument: "The Soviets, created solely by the initiative of the people, are a form of democracy without parallel in any other country of the world . . . At one time, we considered the Constituent Assembly to be better than tsarism and the republic of Kerensky with their famous organs of power; but as the Soviets emerged, they, being revolutionary organizations of the whole people, naturally became incomparably superior to any parliament in the world, a fact that

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I emphasized," referring to his April Theses, "as far back as last April."[93] And later, in one of the best succinct distillations of the Marxist view of the alternative to the soviets, bourgeois democracy, he said, "No bourgeois republic, however democratic, ever was or could have been anything but a machine for the suppression of the working people by capital, an instrument of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the political rule of capital. The democratic bourgeois republic promised and proclaimed majority rule, but it could never put this into effect as long as private ownership of the land and other means of production existed."[94] He provided his Exhibit A: "One of the most democratic republics in the world is the United States of America, yet nowhere (and those who have been there since 1905 probably know it) is the power of capital, the power of a handful of multimillionaires over the whole of society, so crude and so openly corrupt as in America. Once capital exists, it dominates the whole of society, and no democratic republic, no franchise can change its nature."[95]

A related issue that had to be addressed concerned the decision of the new soviet government to disenfranchise the bourgeoisie, which for Lenin was "not a necessary and indispensable feature of the dictatorship of the proletariat."[96] It had to do with the "*specific conditions* of the Russian revolution and the *specific path* of its development."[97] Doing so "does not mean . . . that a definite category of citizens are disfranchised for life. It applies, only to the exploiters, to those who, in violation of the fundamental laws of the socialist Soviet Republic, persist in their efforts to cling to their exploiters' status and to preserve capitalist relations . . . [I]n the very near future, the cessation of foreign invasion and the completion of the expropriation of the expropriators may, under certain circumstances, create a situation where the proletarian state will choose other methods of suppressing the resistance of the exploiters and will introduce unrestricted universal suffrage."[98] "We do not propose," for that reason, "our Constitution as a model for other countries."[99] The civil war, along with the other Russian realities, required such measures—not unlike those that Lincoln employed in the American Civil War.

While defending disenfranchisement of Russia's bourgeoisie—"barely two or three percent of the population"[100]—Lenin urged greater participation of women in the political process: "It is essential that women workers take a greater part in the elections. The Soviet government was the first and only government in the world to abolish completely all the old, bourgeois, infamous laws which placed women in an inferior position compared with men and which granted privileges to men . . . Therefore, elect more women workers, both Communist and non-Party, to the Soviet. If she is only an honest woman worker who is capable of managing work

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sensibly and conscientiously, it makes no difference if she is not a member of the Party—elect her to the Moscow Soviet."[101]

Last, the rationale for soviet governance needed to be spelled out for the first time in the party's program. The first two of the seven reasons he proposed embody their essence:

> The more direct influence of the working masses on state structure and administration—i.e., a higher form of democracy—is also effected under the Soviet type of state, first, by the electoral procedure and the possibility of holding elections more frequently, and also by conditions for re-election and for the recall of deputies which are simpler and more comprehensible to the urban and rural workers than is the case under the best forms of bourgeois democracy . . . secondly, by making the economic, industrial unit (factory) and not a territorial division the primary electoral unit and the nucleus of the state structure under Soviet power.[102]

When detailed figures for the elections to the Constituent Assembly became available a year later, Lenin's penchant for number crunching kicked into high gear. The data, he argued, explained not only why the Bolsheviks were able to take power in October but why they were winning the civil war at the end of 1919. Even Lenin's opponents grudgingly admit to the objectivity and validity of his analysis.[103] The essence of his claim in "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" was that by September 1917 his party had won to its side the majority of Russia's most efficacious voters—those willing to vote with their feet. The Bolsheviks then used that state power to win over the majority of Russia's peasants by decreeing land to them. And therein was a lesson applicable as well to advanced capitalist countries:

> [T]he proletariat cannot achieve victory if it does not win the majority of the population to its side. But to limit that winning to polling a majority of votes in an election *under the rule of the bourgeoisie*, or to make it the condition for it, is crass stupidity, or else sheer deception of the workers. In order to win the majority of the population to its side the proletariat must, in the first place, overthrow the bourgeoisie and seize state power; secondly, it must introduce Soviet power and completely smash the old state apparatus, whereby it immediately undermines the rule, prestige and influence of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois compromisers over the non-proletarian working people. Thirdly, it must *entirely destroy* the influence of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois compromisers over the *majority* of the non-proletarian masses by satisfying *their* economic needs *in a revolutionary way at the expense of the exploiters*.[104]

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The fallacy of Kautsky et al., Lenin argued, was to "imagine that extremely important political problems can be solved by voting. Such problems are actually solved by *civil war* if they are acute and aggravated by struggle." To appreciate his point, think about the American Civil War. Neither the country's constitution nor presidential election of 1860 could resolve its "extremely important political problem"—its equivalent to Russia's long festering sore. Only a conflagration of biblical proportions was able to put an end to chattel slavery. In the midst of the carnage of the First World War and in language reminiscent of the most memorable sentence in Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, Lenin wrote that "too much still remains in the world that *must* be destroyed with fire and sword for the emancipation of the working class."[105]

The last section of the article lists in thesis-like fashion ten points that summarized his argument (see Appendix H). "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" proved to be Lenin's penultimate declaration on the revolutionary employment of the electoral and parliamentary arenas, a summary and generalization of the Russian experience.

In defending soviet power, Lenin made absolutely clear what he didn't intend, as he told delegates to the party's Seventh party congress in 1918: "[W]e ought not in any way to give the impression that we attach absolutely no value to parliamentary institutions. They are a huge advance on what preceded them."[106] The third of his ten "theses" in the "Constituent Assembly Elections" article, in fact, underscored his point. In his better-known pamphlet, written four months later in 1920, *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, Lenin made his most forceful case for participating in the parliamentary arena. The context was the growing attractiveness of the Bolshevik Revolution for aspiring revolutionaries elsewhere in the world, particularly those affiliated with the new Communist or Third International. Clarity on why and how the Bolsheviks took power was essential for any who wanted to emulate their Russian comrades. An emerging problem was the tendency to see the October insurrection as the magic bullet. His pamphlet—along with correspondence to revolutionaries such as Sylvia Pankhurst in Great Britain—and the Bolshevik intervention in the Second Congress of the International in 1920 sought to correct such a narrow reading of the Russian Revolution.[107]

Lenin began with his all-important and too neglected qualification of the historical place of the Russian Revolution. Now it was on center stage, but "soon after the victory of the proletarian revolution in at least one of the advanced countries, a sharp change will probably come about: Russia will cease to be the model and will once again become a backward country

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(in the 'Soviet' and the socialist sense)."[108] Then came his main point based on the actual Bolshevik experience: "The alternation of parliamentary and non-parliamentary forms of struggle, of the tactics of boycotting parliament and that of participating in parliament, of legal and illegal forms of struggle, and likewise their interrelations and connections—all this was marked by an extraordinary wealth of content."[109] After a brief description of the party's decadelong Duma experience, he distilled its significance:

> Today, when we look back at this fully completed historical period, whose connection with subsequent periods has now become quite clear, it becomes most obvious that in 1908–14 the Bolsheviks *could not have* preserved (let alone strengthened and developed) the core of the revolutionary party of the proletariat, had they not upheld, in a most strenuous struggle, the viewpoint that it was *obligatory* to combine legal and illegal forms of struggle, and that it was *obligatory* to participate even in a most reactionary parliament and in a number of other institutions hemmed in by reactionary laws (sick benefit societies, etc.).[110]

The "strenuous struggle" referred to the recurring debate on whether to boycott or participate in the Dumas. If the boycott of the Bulygin Duma in 1905 was correct, that "of the Duma in 1906 was a mistake although a minor and easily remediable one"—his first admission in print of the error and what the circumstantial evidence at the time suggested.

The Russian experience challenged those voices in the Third International who justified nonparticipation in parliaments, especially when they became centers for organizing the counterrevolution: "We Bolsheviks participated in the most counterrevolutionary parliaments, and experience has shown that this participation was not only useful but indispensable to the party of the revolutionary proletariat, after the first bourgeois revolution in Russia (1905), so as to pave the way for the second bourgeois revolution (February 1917), and then for the socialist revolution (October 1917)."[111] The word "indispensable" is itself indispensable for one of the arguments of this book—namely, that Lenin's electoral/parliamentary strategy goes a long way in explaining Bolshevik success in 1917.

As for the claim of some would-be revolutionaries that parliaments had now become "obsolete," Lenin responded, yes and no. The Paris Commune and the Russian experience did indeed show that a new era of representative democracy had opened. But both were only at the beginning of a historical development that could only be "counted in decades." In the meantime, and as long as the dictatorship of capital was in place, the "Lefts" would have to participate in them. It was true, he admitted, that it

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"is far more difficult to create a really revolutionary parliamentary group in a European parliament than it was in Russia. That stands to reason. But it is only a particular expression of the general truth that it was easy for Russia, in the specific and historically unique situation of 1917, to *start* the socialist revolution, but it will be more difficult for Russia than for the European countries to *continue* the revolution and bring it to its consummation."[112] Yes, he could "assure foreign communists" that doing parliamentary work in Russia was "quite unlike the usual West European parliamentary campaigns. From this the conclusion is often drawn: 'Well, that was in Russia, in our country parliamentarianism is different.' This is a false conclusion. Communists, adherents of the Third International in all countries, exist for the purpose of *changing*—all along the line, in all spheres of life—the old socialist, trade unionist, syndicalist, and parliamentary type of work into a *new* type of work, the communist."[113] In the debate at the Second Congress of the International, Lenin reminded delegates that though it was brief, Russia, too, after the February Revolution, experienced bourgeois democracy that the Bolsheviks had to figure out how to negotiate.[114]

Finally, there was another advantage in doing parliamentary work. Because, as the Russian experience showed, "in conditions in which it is often necessary to hide 'leaders' underground, the *evolution* of good 'leaders,' reliable, tested and authoritative, is a very difficult matter; these difficulties *cannot* be successfully overcome without combining legal and illegal work, and *without testing the 'leaders,' among other ways*, in parliaments." The problem with "bad leaders," such as in Germany, wasn't the parliamentary arena itself but "those leaders who are unable—and still more against those who are *unwilling*—to utilize parliamentary elections and the parliamentary rostrum in a revolutionary and communist manner."[115] It could be easier, in other words, being a communist doing "illegal work" but harder in the "legal" or parliamentary arena imbued with its daily temptations to compromise revolutionary politics. Combining the two areas of work would therefore be the best laboratory for communist training.

Left-Wing Communism unambiguously confirms that Lenin intended his electoral/parliamentary strategy for any country where the working class had political weight. Written two and a half years before he succumbed to his last and incapacitating stroke—its 82 pages being far longer than anything he wrote afterward—it constitutes, along with "The Constituent Assembly Elections," Lenin's final and definitive treatment of the topic. At the Second Congress of the Third International in 1920, "Theses on the Communist Parties and Parliamentarism," drafted by

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Trotsky, Nikolai Bukharin, and Zinoviev, were adopted (see Appendix I). They were essentially an elaboration of Lenin's "The Constituent Assembly Elections" article and arguments in *Left-Wing Communism*. Among the 21 conditions for membership in Comintern that delegates to the Second Congress adopted, a debate and discussion in which he actively participated, was number 11. With the betrayals of the Second International in mind when the Guns of August exploded in 1914, it required affiliates to remove from "their parliamentary fractions . . . unreliable elements" and ensure that fraction members were subordinate to party executive committees "not just in words but in deeds" and demand that each "subordinate all of his activity in the interests of truly revolutionary propaganda and agitation."[116]

LENINISM AFTER LENIN

Aspiring revolutionaries affiliated with the Third International took Lenin's counsel to heart. Years later the Hungarian Marxist Georg Lukács remembered his youthful communism, a kind of "messianic sectarianism . . . My polemical essay attacking the idea of participation in bourgeois parliaments is a good example of this tendency. Its fate—criticism at the hands of Lenin—enabled me to take my first step away from sectarianism. Lenin pointed to the vital distinction, indeed to the paradox, that an institution may be obsolete from the standpoint of world history—as, e.g. the soviets had rendered parliaments obsolete—but that this need not preclude participation in it for tactical reasons; on the contrary."[117] But with Lenin gone—and later mummified—such advice would no longer be readily available.

The failure of revolutionaries elsewhere to do what the Bolsheviks had done, despite Lenin's best efforts, to lead their working classes to political power goes a long way in explaining the outcome of the Russian Revolution and, hence, Lenin's legacy. Marx and Engels at the end of their lives and Lenin as early as 1905 made clear that the consummation of a socialist revolution in Russia depended on it spreading to one of the advanced capitalist countries in Europe. For a moment it appeared that the Germans might duplicate what the Bolsheviks did. But the mistakes of the new communist party and the counterrevolutionary actions of social democracy made that impossible. The increasing isolation of the Russian Revolution, combined with the devastating toll of the civil war, became a breeding ground for the bureaucratic counterrevolution Stalin would soon lead. In his final months, Lenin realized what was happening—"a workers' state with bureaucratic distortions" is how he described the Soviet Union—and waged from his sick bed an eventually unsuccessful

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fight to halt that development.[118] Political and historical contingency, in other words, rather than some notion of a democratic deficit in Lenin, best explain the Stalinist counterrevolution.[119] Nothing in Lenin's program and practice prior to those contingencies could have predicted such an outcome. This book has by now, hopefully, amply and convincingly documented Lenin's profoundly democratic credentials. Certainly no one in Russia could rival him in this regard. Like Marx and Engels, he deeply understood that to be a democrat one had to be a revolutionary.

For this book there is no better evidence of the Stalinist counterrevolution that had taken place than the policy that Moscow imposed on the affiliates of the Third International at its Seventh Congress in 1935. In the name of fighting fascism, "Communists . . . *must strive to secure joint action with the Social-Democratic Parties, reformist trade unions and other organizations of the toilers against the class enemies of the proletariat, on the basis of short or long-term agreements*." For the electoral arena it meant that "the Communists must seek to establish a united front with the Social-Democratic Parties and the trade unions . . . and exert every effort to prevent the election of reactionary and fascist candidates. In face of fascist danger, the Communist may . . . participate in election campaigns on *a common platform and with a common ticket of the anti-fascist front* [all italics in original]."[120]

If this sounds familiar to readers of this book, it should be. This was essentially the line that Lenin combatted in more than one Duma election. Mensheviks incessantly advocated support to the Cadets as the "lesser evil" in order, according to them, to prevent the election of the Black Hundreds—the fascist equivalent. Lenin vehemently disagreed and always fought, like Marx and Engels, for independent working-class political action despite the "Black Hundred scare." That the Seventh was the last Third International Congress is no coincidence. To convince bourgeois heads of state like Franklin Delano Roosevelt that the communists in his country were no longer a threat because of the new Popular Front policy, Stalin unilaterally pulled the plug on what had already been by then a comatose organization. For would-be revolutionaries who looked to Moscow for guidance, the vast majority in that era, Lenin's real electoral/parliamentary strategy would never be made available for them. Only the relatively small number of those who looked to Trotsky for leadership learned differently.

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It fell to Trotsky to defend and fight for Lenin's real program. No one had better credentials. Once a bitter opponent of Lenin, the person who

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launched the Lenin-as-Jacobin charge, Trotsky embraced him in 1917 to ensure Bolshevik success and later died at the hands of one of Stalin's assassins in 1940 for leading the struggle against the counterrevolution. No better perspective exists on what the Soviet experiment sought to achieve than the final comments in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, written two decades after the Bolshevik triumph in October 1917:

> The historic ascent of humanity, taken as a whole, may be summarized as a succession of victories of consciousness over blind forces—in nature, in society, in man himself. Critical and creative thought can boast of its greatest victories up to now in the struggle with nature. The physico-chemical sciences have already reached a point where man is clearly about to become master of matter. But social relations are still forming in the manner of the coral islands. Parliamentarism illumined only the surface of society, and even that with a rather artificial light. In comparison with monarchy and other heirlooms from the cannibals and cave-dwellers, democracy is of course a great conquest, but it leaves the blind play of forces in the social relations of men untouched. It was against this deeper-sphere of the unconscious that the October revolution was the first to raise its hand. The Soviet system wishes to bring aim and plan into the very basis of society, where up to now only accumulated consequences have reigned.[121]

Unless it's assumed that the present examples of representative democracy—including the US Congress—constitute humanity's last word on the subject, then the Bolsheviks should be applauded for at least having tried to do better.[122] Lenin deserves the last word, because his insight about the reality of bourgeois democracy, made in 1908, is so nakedly instantiated today by the ways in which the ruling classes, employing the legislative process, seek to resolve the present capitalist crisis—on the backs of working people. "Parliamentarism does not eliminate, but lays bare the innate character even of the most democratic bourgeois republics as organs of class oppression."

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Conclusion

The news from Cairo as these lines are being written—late summer 2013—is that supporters of deposed Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood are bracing for a violent confrontation with the military. Morsi's government, the product of the mass protests that brought down the three-decade-old rule of Hosni Mubarak in January 2011, Egypt's edition of the "Arab Spring," was itself victim to "the streets." Increasingly, the latter felt that what they had achieved with Mubarak's overthrow was being undermined by the Islamist regime. But if the democratic movement knew what it was against, it couldn't agree on what it was for. Into that breach stepped the one institution in Egypt that at least had a leadership—the military. Four chapters and almost a year ago, I stated that Egypt's democratic revolution was still up for grabs and asked, "Is there a leadership with a program prepared to rule in the name of the movement?" The evidence so far suggests not.

In many ways this book—again, this and the companion volume, *Lenin's Electoral Strategy from Marx and Engels through the Revolution of 1905* (*LES1905*)—is about whether history offers any lessons on how to forge a revolutionary leadership. The focus is Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution and, more specifically, how he employed the electoral and parliamentary arenas to do just that. The task now is, first, to see if sufficient and convincing evidence has been presented in support of the four arguments around which the narrative is woven. Second, if a credible case has been made, then what explains the silences in the literature—by friends and foes alike—about this very rich and heretofore untold story? Last, does the Bolshevik experience offer any lessons to those not just in Tahrir Square but anywhere who seek for the world's toilers a working-class solution to a still-unfolding capitalist crisis of unprecedented scope?

An Overview of the Evidence and Four Arguments

A summary of Lenin's electoral and parliamentary strategy and how it played out is in order before I interrogate the book's claims. His two basic premises, the subject of Chapter 1 in *LES1905*, were bequeathed by Marx and Engels. The first, based on the balance sheets the two

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founders of the modern communist movement drew on the "European Spring" of 1848–49, is that what takes place outside the parliamentary arena is decisive in politics. To believe otherwise is to be afflicted with parliamentary cretinism. It's what the masses do or do not do in the streets and on the barricades that determines which class rules. The unsuccessful upheavals of those two years also revealed that the liberal bourgeoisie no longer had a class interest in leading revolutions. No subsequent "outside the parliamentary arena" moment was as instructive as the Paris Commune of 1871, which provided the second and complimentary premise for Marx and Engels's perspective. The insurgent Communards, only two and a half months in power, quickly learned that they could not use the bourgeois state and its parliamentary apparatus to meet the social needs of the plebian orders. A new kind of state had to be constructed for socialist transformation, one that fused the legislative and executive functions of governance. For Marx and Engels, there was no parliamentary road to working-class conquest of state power and socialist transformation.

Though the electoral/parliamentary arena could not be a vehicle for working-class ascent to power, it offered, Marx and Engels contended, unique and invaluable assistance in that quest. But the working class had to have its own candidates in elections, "even when there is no prospect whatever of their being elected," to be able "to count their forces and to lay before the public their revolutionary attitude and party standpoint." Nor should the working class be deterred in this effort by the charge of liberals, who betrayed the 1848–49 revolutions, that "by doing so they are splitting the democratic party and giving the reactionaries the possibility of victory."[1] Independent working-class political action was the core message of one of Marx and Engels's balance sheets on the European Spring, the *Address of March 1850*—the founding document for their strategy and one Lenin not only knew by heart but "used to delight in quoting."[2] Two paragraphs before the previous citations in the *Address* is a detailed discussion of why "the workers must be armed and organized," making clear that Marx and Engels were prepared to employ armed struggle if necessary and were under no illusions that elections in and of themselves ensured working-class empowerment. Elections were merely one sphere of revolutionary work, albeit an important one. Their later books, articles, and letters on working-class involvement in electoral and parliamentary arenas are essentially, as detailed in Chapter 1 of *LES1905*, an elaboration of the themes of the *Address*, supplemented with advice based on the experiences of the first mass working-class parties, especially the German party.

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Already well-versed in Marx and Engels's ideas, Lenin enthusiastically deployed them when the opportunity arose in 1906 with the convening of the First Duma, a concession the Russian monarchy was forced to grant owing to the masses' revolt of 1905. That is the subject of Chapter 2 in *LES1905*. Though the 15 Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) deputies who were elected were all Mensheviks—the Bolsheviks boycotted the elections—Lenin immediately embraced them. His main task, as Chapter 3 in *LES1905* explains, was to convince them of the need for an alliance with the deputies who represented the peasantry in order to undermine the efforts of the liberal Cadet party that wanted the peasant representatives' backing. A worker-peasant alliance rather than a liberal-peasant alliance was critical to Lenin's vision of Russia's bourgeois democratic revolution, the necessary vehicle for its socialist revolution. While the real and effective alliance of these two classes that he fought to forge lay outside the Duma walls, Lenin recognized that the legislative deliberations and the actions of the RSDLP Duma group or fraction, publicized by the Bolshevik press, could be invaluable toward that end. Success required a thoroughgoing critique of not only the Cadets but the Menshevik leadership who courted them on the assumption that Russia's liberal bourgeoisie, whom the Cadets represented, was the necessary class for a bourgeois democratic revolution. Lenin agreed that the coming Russian revolution was a bourgeois democratic one, but he looked not to the liberals but rather to the peasantry, who in its vast majority wanted to be property owners. And the peasant-elected deputies in the Duma were the closest thing the peasantry had to political representation. That was why Lenin followed the debates on the land question closely as well as intervening in them through his articles and drafts for the fraction members' speeches. As the dominant party in the First Duma, the Cadets, Lenin argued, would reveal their true counterrevolutionary colors. Informed by the lessons Marx and Engels drew from the European Spring, specifically the betrayal of the liberals, Lenin's forecast about the Cadets proved accurate.

By calcified Romanov standards, however, even a Cadet-led Duma proved too liberal, and it was sent packing after having sat for only three months. In the meantime the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks had a unity congress in Stockholm at which they agreed to important norms of how to do Duma work. The most significant was that the party had to exercise control over the Duma fraction. In anticipation of the Duma being prorogued and new elections being called, the congress also decided against electoral blocs with the Cadets. In response to Czar Nicholas's dismissal of the Duma, Lenin called on the RSDLP and peasant deputies to use their

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parliamentary immunity to organize armed resistance, a testament to how important Duma work—not just a venue to agitate and propagandize—had become for him.

With the First Duma experience under his belt, Lenin hit the ground running in preparation for the Second Duma—how Chapter 4 in *LES1905* begins. This time he made sure the Bolsheviks would not boycott the elections, and after an intense internal party debate and vote he won the majority to his position. It wasn't easy to make the case given the increasingly repressive policies of the regime. This was the moment when Lenin wrote the most he ever did on the organization of armed struggle. He then made preparations for the election campaign and composed the first of his key writings on the topic. The heart of the article was the ever-current issue of vote splitting and the lesser-evil conundrum that has always confronted progressive forces in the electoral arena. Wouldn't failure to form a bloc with the Cadets allow the fascist-like Black Hundreds to be victorious? Lenin, informed by Marx and Engels's *Address*, disagreed on both political and evidential grounds; for the latter, with his penchant for number crunching, he made a detailed analysis of election returns for the First Duma. It and related articles explained how to construct electoral blocs and conduct the election campaign in conformity with independent working-class political action. Once the Second Duma convened in February 1907 with a much larger representation of peasant and RSDLP deputies, respectively 157 and 67 out of 524 in total, Lenin immediately took up where he had left off with the First Duma, working closely with the fraction, most of whom were Mensheviks, to forge the worker-peasant alliance. The land question was again the central issue. The speeches Lenin drafted for the fraction were designed to convince the peasant deputies—and the larger public who read them in the Bolshevik press—why the working class and not the liberal Cadets were their real allies. The peasant deputies' votes and speeches gave Lenin reason to believe his strategy was working. Another and more inclusive party congress, in London this time, gave him more authority to lead that effort. It was success in that work that helped put the new Duma once again on a collision course with the government.

In June 1907 the regime pulled the plug on the Second Duma, arrested most of the RSDLP deputies, and decreed new elections, but this time under rules that would guarantee a Duma more to its liking. Chapter 1 in this volume commences with an account of how Lenin once again had to convince his Bolshevik comrades to take part despite the blatantly undemocratic new rules. In doing so, he offered his most succinct analysis of 1905's events and of how revolutionaries should partake

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in undemocratic elections. The debate eventually resulted in a split in Bolshevik ranks, with the departure of a minority who wanted either to boycott the elections or, later, to recall those RSDLP deputies they claimed comported themselves poorly in the Duma. While the paper trail for Lenin's role in the Third Duma election campaign is sparser than the Second Duma's, it's clear that he was just as active, even from afar. The new electoral rules achieved their purpose: both the RSDLP and peasant representation were significantly reduced in the new Duma, from 67 to 18 and 157 to 13, respectively, out of 442 deputies. Because the Third Duma's tenure from 1907 to 1912 coincided with the downturn in the class struggle—the counterrevolution was in full swing—it offered fewer opportunities to coordinate Duma work with mass work. Nevertheless, Lenin was able to deepen collaboration between the RSDLP and peasant deputies. In hindsight it also proved a useful training ground for what Lenin would call revolutionary parliamentary work, the combination of legal and illegal work. But that required a party leadership committed to such a method. That only occurred when the de facto Bolshevik-Menshevik split in the RSDLP became "official" in 1912, giving Lenin a clearer hand in leading the work.

The convening of the Fourth Duma at the end of 1912 coincided with a new upsurge in the class struggle, making it possible to use the parliamentary arena to "prepare for . . . a new Russian revolution"—the focus of Chapter 2. The axis of the Bolshevik election campaign was the clarification of the difference between liberalism and democracy, which in turn determined its approach to electoral agreements. The election results served as a "test" of these two very different perspectives before the electorate. Though the RSDLP fraction was reduced to 13, its 6 Bolshevik deputies, unlike the 7 Mensheviks, were firmly rooted in the industrial working class unlike ever before, owing in part to a unique electoral process that gave the working class its own electoral college. The 11-member peasant representation continued to work with the RSDLP deputies, especially the Bolsheviks. Armed with a daily, *Pravda*, that entailed a constant game of hide and seek with the government and its censors, Lenin, still from afar, was in a much better position to coordinate the legal and illegal work. Most important for posterity, one of the Bolshevik deputies left an invaluable eyewitness account. The insurmountable differences between the Menshevik and Bolshevik deputies resulted in a very public split in fall 1913, followed by a very awkward situation for the Bolsheviks: a fraction head on the payroll of the Czar's secret police.

All this came to a head with the near-revolutionary situation in July 1914 and then the Guns of August of the First World War. Only the

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Bolshevik deputies, now down to five, stood up to the regime's chauvinist campaign and, using their parliamentary immunity status, actively campaigned against the war. Their counterparts in the German party and elsewhere in Western Europe, fearful of losing their legal status, failed overwhelmingly to do the same. For their efforts the Bolshevik deputies were arrested, put on trial, and sentenced to hard labor at the beginning of 1915. Their antiwar work and the comportment of one of the deputies at the trial became for Lenin a "model of revolutionary parliamentarism."

The overthrow of the three-hundred-year-old Romanov dynasty in February 1917, a consequence of the war, made it possible for Lenin and the Bolsheviks to use the revived parliamentary arena once again, but this time accompanied by a new kind of governing institution. Soviets, unlike the dumas, combined legislative and executive functions. The decadelong experience with the four state Dumas served the Bolsheviks well in carrying out this kind of work, as Chapter 3 shows. Elections to municipal dumas and the soviets permitted the Bolsheviks to do exactly what Marx and Engels had counseled about the advantages of universal suffrage for the working-class party: to "count their forces," to "gauge the maturity of the working class," to measure the "boiling point among the workers," and to indicate "with the most perfect accuracy the day when a call to armed revolution has to be made." This advice, crucial to Lenin's calculus, when combined with the Duma experience, explains not only when and why the Bolsheviks were able to lead the working class to state power in October 1917 but why that conquest was successfully defended. One of his many tasks afterward was to distill and generalize those lessons for aspiring revolutionaries elsewhere in the world.

The four claims this book makes, to repeat, are that, first, no one did more to use the electoral and parliamentary arenas for revolutionary ends than Lenin. Second, the framework he used and conclusions he reached were squarely rooted in the politics of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Third, the historic split in international Marxism between communism and social democracy was a de facto reality before the Guns of August of 1914 exploded, owing in large part to two very different conceptions of how Marxists should comport themselves in the two arenas—with Lenin on one side and what would become twentieth-century social democracy on the other side. Last, the head-start program the founders of the modern communist movement left to Lenin on electoral/parliamentary politics goes a long way toward explaining why the Bolsheviks were hegemonic in October 1917.

(1) It's possible that someone else did more than Lenin to use the electoral and parliamentary arenas for revolutionary ends—but there is

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no written record of such a person. What does the record reveal about Lenin himself and about Lenin in relation to such a possible other? The reader, I suspect, has been surprised, as I was, to learn how much Lenin had to say about the electoral/parliamentary process. What's presented in these two volumes is at best 5 percent of what exists in the *Lenin Collected Works* (*LCW*), the most complete publication of his writings in English, exceeded only by the slightly longer Russian edition. The bulk of his writings on the topic are from between the 1905 Revolution and the 1915 trial of the five Bolshevik deputies, from volume 8 to 21 of the 45-volume collection and distilled in Chapters 3 and 4 in *LES1905*, and Chapters 1 and 2 in this volume. I estimate that in those 14 volumes only the peasant question received more attention—which was not separate from the electoral/parliamentary question, as his efforts to forge the worker-peasant alliance through Duma work show. For the entire collection, there are approximately as many entries in the subject index volume for the electoral/parliamentary topics as for topics related to his better known party-building project. The norm of democratic centralism, for example, was—unappreciated until now—intimately linked to electoral/parliamentary work. More concretely, should delegated party-meeting decisions be binding on the Duma fraction or not? In addition, it can be rightly assumed that the *LCW* doesn't include all that he ever wrote on the topics. Krupskaya, as noted, said that many records had to be destroyed before she and Lenin escaped Finland at the end of 1907, much of which, no doubt, had to do with the elections and activities of the party fraction to the Second Duma. Also known is that they abandoned troves of records when they were forced to flee Cracow when the war began. According to one estimate, it amounted to the equivalent of 640 volumes, or 14 times the size of the 45-volume *LCW*![3] It doesn't appear, from a close reading of the *LCW*, that any of that—much of which certainly dealt with the Fourth Duma—found its way into the 45 volumes.

It is patently clear, therefore, that electoral/parliamentary politics was as central to Lenin's project as anything else—unacknowledged in any of the standard Leninological accounts. More important is that the axis around which this work revolved, what this book details, was fidelity to revolutionary politics. Because the Bolsheviks had a significant core of skeptics within their ranks who doubted it could be done, Lenin was forced to make a case for participation and provide evidence that he was right. In addition to those Bolshevik were the abstentionist anarchist-minded forces, best represented by the Socialist Revolutionaries. The near-absolutist character of Czarist Russia understandably bred skepticism about participation in either arena.

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On the other hand, there were the Mensheviks who were always inclined to do just what the skeptics feared—compromise revolutionary politics. A recurring theme in Lenin's polemics to them was the refutation of their lesser-evil/Black Hundred scare tactic, employed to justify support for the Cadets. The combination of the two tendencies required vigilance and agility on his part. The mistakes of the Third Duma fraction and the criticisms they engendered from the boycottists forced Lenin to not just defend participation in the Duma but produce positive results. Midway into the tenure of the Third Duma, Lenin took charge to make sure that would happen. In anticipation of the elections to the Fourth Duma and the need to prepare for them and avoid the weaknesses of the Third Duma fraction, Lenin took the fateful steps, the Prague Conference in 1912, that effectively put to bed the old RSDLP and birthed the new Bolshevik party—again, the nexus between electoral/parliamentary work and party building.

What about Lenin vis-à-vis a possible other? Was there anyone else who came close to producing such a corpus of writings either before or during his lifetime? It's unlikely, because had they existed Lenin would have made reference to them. When he began in 1905 to write in a sustained manner on the topic, he cited everything he could find that Marx and Engels had to say. Even before then, he cited Kautsky's 1893 book *Parliamentarism*, from which Lenin probably took the term. He looked closely at anything the German party (the SPD) did and said, since it was indeed the flagship institution of international social democracy. Rather than any particular writings, he more often pointed to the actions of the SPD and the examples of Bebel and Liebknecht as models for comportment in both arenas. There is no body of SPD literature as extensive, certainly, that details electoral/parliamentary work in the way that Lenin's output does. Buried, perhaps, in party archives is a treasure trove of documents waiting to be discovered. But until then, I stand by this claim. Nor for any other West European social democratic party is there anything comparable to what Lenin produced. Dutch Marxist Anton Pannekoek's *The Tactical Differences in the Labor Movement*, published in 1910, which Lenin praised, is the exception to the rule.

Neither did the Mensheviks nor any of their leaders like Martov produce anything as rich as did Lenin. Without having thoroughly plowed Menshevik sources, it's safe to make that claim, because here, too, Lenin's own record is instructive. Owing to their intense and public debates, he was unlikely to ignore any significant Menshevik interventions. There's more to be learned, for example, about Martov's views on the electoral/parliamentary work by reading Lenin than what his well-known and

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otherwise authoritative biography supplies.[4] The fact is that none of the Mensheviks were willing to put in the time and energy to be as vigilant as was Lenin in making sure that work hewed to revolutionary standards. Whereas the Mensheviks had an interest in minimizing differences with the Cadets—in constant quest for an alliance with them—Lenin seized every opportunity around Duma elections and Duma deliberations to educate workers on the differences between revolutionary social democracy and liberalism, arguably the most repeated theme in his interventions. That required far more ink. That the German movement didn't, apparently, produce anything comparable to what the Russians did probably had to do with the fact that by the time the latter came onto the parliamentary scene, the SPD had settled down into a kind of routinism without controversy. The consequences of a lack of debate about that modus operandi only became clear when the Guns of August exploded.

As for what happened after Lenin, nothing came close to equaling what he produced. Two reasons, I think, account for this. The proponents of Moscow's Popular Front policy, the vast majority of those who claimed to do politics in his name, had, as I suggested in Chapter 3, no interest in promoting and therefore expanding on what he'd done. For those, on the other hand, who wanted to emulate his example and had the good fortune to actually know what it was—most likely those allied with and/or descended from Trotsky's Left Opposition—their task, as they saw it, wasn't the reinvention of the wheel. Rather it was to put the wheel in motion. The lessons Lenin drew, codified in the Theses of the Second Congress of Comintern in 1920, had said all that was essential.

(2) What about the second claim, that Lenin's electoral/parliamentary strategy was squarely rooted in Marx and Engels's program? Lenin, as the record makes clear, certainly thought so. The question, though, is whether he was correct. Chapter 1 in *LES1905*, "What Marx and Engels Bequeathed," makes possible an informed answer. There were basically two debates in which he was engaged: one with the abstentionists, such as the boycottists, anarchists, and Socialist Revolutionaries, about whether to partake in electoral politics; the other, with the Mensheviks, Plekhanov, and Kautsky, about how revolutionary social democrats should conduct themselves in political spheres. Let's begin with the former, the easier of the two to address.

There is no instance in the Marx-Engels record of either ever advocating nonparticipation in the electoral arena. To the contrary, they enthusiastically embraced it. As soon as the 1848 revolt made it possible for workers to vote for a constituent assembly and parliament, Marx and Engels organized, even under prejudicial rules and in opposition to some in the

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workers' movement, a campaign in the name of the Communist League. When the workers' movement in Germany revived in the 1860s, they applauded its independent working-class political action. They pointed to the electoral gains of what would eventually be the SPD as a model for affiliates to the International Working Men's Association (IWA). At the London Conference in 1871, they opposed the abstentionist stance of the anarchists and succeeded in getting the IWA to make independent working-class political action including electoral participation official policy—the go-ahead for launching mass working-class political parties. In critiquing the Bolshevik boycotters and abstentionism of the Socialist Revolutionaries, Lenin therefore was indisputably carrying out the line of Marx and Engels.

What about his differences with the Mensheviks et al. about how the proletariat should comport itself in the electoral/parliamentary arena? Who was more faithful to Marx and Engels's program? This requires a closer reading of their texts. Plekhanov, certainly, and some of the Mensheviks, rested their case (wooing the liberal Cadet Party) on their reading of the *Communist Manifesto*, written before the 1848–1849 Revolutions began. Specifically, the sentence in Part IV of the document that states that communists must "fight with the bourgeoisie whenever it acts in a revolutionary way, against the absolute monarchy, the feudal squirearchy, and the petty bourgeoisie"[5] is what they pointed to in justifying their unending quest for an alliance with the Cadets. Lenin, who is said to have committed it to memory, countered with the *Address of March 1850* and other balance sheets Marx and Engels drew on the 1848–49 upheavals. The fact is that the liberal bourgeoisie in both Germany and France caved in to the authoritarian forces and could no longer be expected to lead the bourgeois democratic revolution—the basic lesson of the European Spring.[6] In Germany, the liberal bourgeoisie had succumbed to "parliamentary cretinism"—a label Lenin enjoyed tacking on to their homologues in Russia—and failed to recognize that the real fight for democracy lay outside the walls of the parliamentary arena. The French revolution and counterrevolution taught that universal suffrage was a means to an end, not an end in itself: "It had to be set aside by a revolution or by the reaction."

As the *Address* insisted, only independent working-class political action in the electoral arena could ensure victory for the democratic struggle—exactly what Lenin advocated and fought for. That required the workers' party to run its own candidates "alongside the bourgeois-democratic candidates . . . Even where there is no prospect whatever of their being elected." Doing so allowed it "to count their forces and to lay before the

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public their revolutionary attitude and party standpoint." The workers' party should not be misled by the claims of the democrats that in so doing "they are splitting the democratic party and giving the reactionaries the possibility of victory . . . The advance which the proletarian party is bound to make by such independent action is infinitely more important than the disadvantage that might be incurred by the presence of a few reactionaries in the representative body."[7] Lenin therefore had every reason to believe that in rejecting the Menshevik policy of courting the Cadets or forming electoral blocs with them he was acting in complete accordance with the historic program of Marx and Engels.

The next most important conclusion in the Marx-Engels arsenal, in chronological order, was the key lesson of the Paris Commune—namely, that the working class could not use the bourgeois republic to carry out socialist transformation; the Communards had to construct a new state form. That lesson—the only addendum Marx and Engels ever made to the *Manifesto*—informed, more than any other, Lenin's defense contra Kautsky et al. of the soviet state as a democratic form superior to the parliamentary republic. The similarity of soviet governance to the Commune, the way in which it performed before and after October 1917, and the fact that it was more popular with workers and peasants than parliamentary governance—neither voted with their feet in favor of the latter when push came to shove—also gave Lenin just reason to claim that his politics were more faithful than his opponents' to Marx and Engels's program.

Marx and Engels's *Circular Letter of 1879* was their principal statement about how working-class parties should conduct themselves in the parliamentary arena. One of its themes, that the parliamentary group must be subordinate to the party and its decisions, is precisely what Lenin insisted on about the Duma fractions and what increasingly put him at odds with the Mensheviks. They wanted more flexibility for the fraction in order that it be able to bend to the whims of the Cadets. The differences between the two on this and related matters resulted in the fraction being formally split in the Fourth Duma into two wings: one Bolshevik and the other Menshevik-liquidator. Again, as with other Marx-Engels foundational documents, the *Circular Letter* sounded more Lenin-like than Menshevik-like.

In other writings of the era when the German party was increasing its share of vote totals, Marx and Engels reiterated their utilitarian approach to universal suffrage and elections. The most notable comment came in Engels's *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, written in connection with the approaching 1884 Reichstag elections: "Universal

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suffrage is the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state; but that is sufficient. On the day the thermometer of universal suffrage registers boiling-point among the workers, both they and the capitalists will know where they stand." He wrote more explicitly in a private communication: "[U]niversal suffrage . . . indicates with the most perfect accuracy the day when a call to armed revolution has to be made." No advice, as the events of 1917 reveal—detailed in Chapter 3—was as influential and consequential as this in Lenin's calculus for the timing of the Bolshevik-led insurrection.

With his partner in his grave, it fell to Engels to counsel the German party as well as others. On more than one occasion, he cautioned against thinking that the number of seats won in an election was decisive. To assume so was to indulge illusions of a peaceful route to the working class taking power. In his final years, Engels fought to dispel such a reading of his own views, particularly in the case of Germany: "I have never said the socialist party will become the majority and then proceed to take power. On the contrary, I have expressly said that the odds are ten to one that our rulers, well before that point arrives, will use violence against us, and this would shift us from the terrain of majority to the terrain of revolution."[8] In broad strokes, this comes awfully close to what actually happened in Russia in 1917 and why Lenin, against the objections of Kautsky—the issue of the majority—felt rightly that the Bolshevik-led insurrection was very much in the mold of Marx and Engels.

In sum, then, the totality of Marx and Engels's positions as detailed in Chapter 1 in *LES1905* offer convincing evidence that Lenin's electoral/parliamentary strategy was indeed more faithful to their politics than that of his opponents like Plekhanov, the Mensheviks, and Kautsky.

A final observation—both Marx and Engels, as pointed out in Chapter 1, expressed on occasion leeriness about Kautsky, his grasp of politics and theory, and his character. In contrast is the comment Engels made about the Russians that he and Marx were beginning to work with in 1872, worth repeating: "As far as talent and character are concerned, some of [them] . . . are absolutely among the very best in our party. They have a stoicism, a strength of character and at the same time a grasp of theory which are truly admirable." Though he was barely two years old when it was written, no Russian, I contend, better fitted that description than Lenin. Trotsky, a one-time opponent whose own Marxist theoretical credentials were second only to Lenin's—his theory of Stalinism being his most original contribution—was more qualified than anyone to write of Lenin, "Marx has never had a better reader, one more penetrating or more grateful, nor a more attentive, congenial, or capable student."[9]

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(3) What about the argument that the historic split in international Marxism between communism and social democracy was effectively in place—irreconcilable differences—before the Guns of August of 1914 exploded due in large part to two very different conceptions of how Marxists should comport themselves in the electoral/parliamentary arenas, with Lenin on one side and what would become twentieth-century social democracy on the other side? In the immediate aftermath of the fateful vote for war credits, Lenin offered an explanation. The German party, the chief culprit, had made "a fetish of the necessary utilization of bourgeois parliamentarism and bourgeois legality." Afraid they'd lose their parliamentary immunity, their deputies failed to act as the five Bolsheviks did—to engage in revolutionary antiwar work. But even prior to this "betrayal of socialism," the leadership of the Second International "had long been preparing to wreck" the organization by succumbing to opportunism and bourgeois reformism, "the danger of which have long been indicated by the finest representatives of the revolutionary proletariat of all countries."[10] The question then is what evidence is there prior to August 1914 that supports Lenin's claims?

It was the debate on the colonial and antiwar questions at the 1907 Congress of the Second International (see Chapter 1) that first revealed for Lenin the tendency of the German party to bend to opportunism, the "sacrifice of the future of the movement for its present" as Engels defined it in his criticism of the party's draft program in 1891. The debate on militarism was especially instructive. Georg Vollmar, the leader of the SPD's right wing—and once the target of Engels's critique of that wing—exemplified "parliamentary cretinism." Instead of limiting antiwar work to "parliamentary methods" as he advocated, revolutionary social democracy, Lenin argued, should "utilize the crisis created by the war to hasten the overthrow of the bourgeoisie"—exactly what the Bolsheviks would do seven years later. Along with the fact that the Cadets and other liberals were now beginning to hold up the SPD as a model that the Bolsheviks should emulate, the conduct of the Germans at the congress no doubt prompted Lenin to look more closely at the party that had indeed once been his inspiration.[11] Clearly a portion of it, if not the whole, had succumbed to the "parliamentary disease."[12]

In the debates with the boycotters and recallists (see Chapter 1), Lenin came to the defense of the German party against accusations that it practiced "parliamentarism at any price." This might suggest that he backtracked on his increasing sobriety about the party in the aftermath of the 1907 Congress. The evidence reveals, rather, that he increasingly differentiated between the opportunist and revolutionary wings of the SPD.

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He did the same with regard to the British movement (Chapter 2), and in both cases, especially for Germany, he expected that the revolutionaries, more prevalent in the ranks than in the leaderships, would be triumphant. Whether his optimism was warranted is debatable. The subsequent trajectories of both parties would suggest that it was misplaced. But that's the benefit of hindsight the historian enjoys. Lenin was first and foremost a politician who sought to influence outcomes as he did when in 1913 he called on the ranks in the British movement to challenge the opportunist electoral and parliamentary practices of their reformist leaders.

The growing split in the RSDLP Duma fraction in the Fourth Duma anticipated more than anything the eventual split in international social democracy. Kautsky exposed his heretofore pro-Menshevik sympathies by effectively siding with them when the split actually took place—his "unpardonable error" as Lenin called it in December 1913. His assumption that only parliamentary or legal work counted in determining the well-being of a workers' party was telling—why the German party was unwilling to jeopardize its legality and do what the Bolshevik five did when the Great War began. "We must not play down the *disease which* the German party is undoubtedly suffering from," Lenin wrote five months before August 4.

Finally, there was the conference in Brussels on the eve of the war that the leadership of the International called to discuss the split in the Russian party. Lenin had no illusions about its outcome. He assumed correctly that the "officers' corps" of Western European social democracy was more sympathetic to the Mensheviks than the Bolsheviks. When they ruled that the latter should liquidate themselves, it only confirmed what he had concluded by then—an irreconcilable split existed in international social democracy between a reformist wing and a revolutionary wing.

Not only were the differences between the two wings in place and increasingly acknowledged by Lenin, but they go a long way in explaining the two very different responses to the outbreak of the First World War: that of the five Bolshevik deputies on one side (along with the Serbian party) versus on the other not only the majority of the SPD Reichstag Fraktion but the seven Menshevik deputies as well. Unlike the Bolsheviks, the SPD and Mensheviks were unwilling to use their parliamentary status for antiwar work. The similar response or lack thereof of the latter two to the war suggests that the different response of the Bolsheviks can't be attributed to their operating in a different national environment. That the Menshevik parliamentary strategy was similar to that of the SPD—legality at any price (they were called liquidators because they wanted to end the kind of illegal work the Bolsheviks practiced)—is strong evidence

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that it was indeed political and not national differences that determined how parties responded to the war. Whether Lenin fully appreciated the significance of the difference is admittedly uncertain, since it appears that he, too, was surprised by the fateful vote of the SPD Fraktion. Nevertheless, the evidence is quite strong that before the outbreak of the Great War two irreconcilable groupings existed in international social democracy that centered on fundamental disagreements about how to carry out electoral and parliamentary work and that largely explain their differential responses to the war.

(4) The last argument, that the head-start program the founders of the modern communist movement left to Lenin on electoral/parliamentary politics was key in why the Bolsheviks were hegemonic in October 1917, is the most important, because it addresses the "So what?" question. That is, what difference did it make that electoral/parliamentary work was central to Lenin's politics and that it was squarely rooted in the project of Marx and Engels? Chapter 3 makes the case for the fourth argument. There are, first, the events in 1917 leading up to the Bolshevik-led triumph and, second, Lenin's post-October reflections.

Once Lenin returned to Russia after the February Revolution, he consciously and actively used the new and unprecedented political space to win the effective majority to socialist revolution—those willing to vote with their feet. Participation in the elections to the soviets and local dumas and their deliberations figured significantly in his strategy. Thus the rich experience of the Bolsheviks leading up to and in the four state Dumas, distilled in Chapter 3 in *LES1905* and Chapters 1 and 2 in this volume, could serve them well in carrying out this strategy. Compared, however, to the published record about those pre-1914 activities, what's available for what Lenin did after he returned in April is much sparser. The main reason, I suspect, is that once back in Petrograd he could have more face-to-face meetings, thus leaving a thinner paper trail. However, there is enough published evidence, I argue, to make the case.

For Lenin, after the July Days and the Kerensky-Kornilov putsch attempt, it was no longer a question of whether to take power but when. Decisive in his calculations were the elections to the soviets and local dumas. The advice of Marx and Engels, some of which he knew by heart, had currency for him like never before. From their *Address of March 1850* to Engels's *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* to a letter to Paul Lafargue decades later, elections, respectively, allowed workers "to count their forces," or were "the thermometer that registers the boiling point among workers," or, even more explicitly, indicated "with the most perfect accuracy the day when a call to armed revolution has to

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be made." No wonder, then, why Lenin went into full campaign mode for the municipal duma elections in July and August. The details of that campaign from other sources, including the memoirs of Bolshevik leaders who described the elections as a means of "taking the revolutionary temperature of the masses," Krupskaya's account about her own involvement in the election campaign, the tone and language of the campaign literature in the party press, all suggest that Lenin was indeed the orchestrator. His fingerprints, based on what he had done before not only in the elections to the four state Duma elections but in those to the municipal dumas in May 1917, were all over the campaign. The burden of proof is on those who argue otherwise.

Certainly, he pored over the vote totals. No other Bolshevik gave as much attention to election returns as Lenin. "The data on the parliamentary elections," as he explained to other Bolshevik leaders at the beginning of October in an effort to convince them of the need to take power, "are the objective facts regarding the majority of the revolutionary elements that are leading the people." Most of the Central Committee was won over. Not only, then, did Marx and Engels's advice inform the timing of Lenin's actions, but it proved to be efficacious, accounting for the relative ease with which the Provisional Government was overthrown.

After October, Lenin drew balance sheets on what the Bolsheviks had done and why they were successful. His analysis of the election returns for the Constituent Assembly was especially instructive. It revealed, he argued, why the Bolsheviks not only were victorious in October but would be in the civil war that was drawing to a close. And in his longest writing after the triumph, he attributed success in October to the decadelong experience of combining legal work, specifically participation in parliamentary work, and illegal work. That experience, he claimed, was "indispensable" in the Bolshevik victory—a lesson that would-be revolutionaries should absorb.

In showing that Lenin's electoral strategy was squarely rooted in Marx and Engels's project (this book's second argument), it becomes possible therefore to connect the dots between the politics of the two founders of the modern communist movement and the Bolshevik-led triumph in 1917. This is the first study—surprisingly, given all the forests felled for writing about the Russian Revolution—to do so. Demonstrating the historical links does not, certainly, make for a causal explanation. But for any credible explanation of a revolution, let alone a causal one—with all the difficulty that entails for social phenomena—connecting the political dots is a necessary step. Though the evidence is incontrovertible that Lenin attributed Bolshevik success to its electoral/parliamentary experience and

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saw it as thoroughly informed by Marx and Engels's politics, one could, of course, claim that he was simply wrong. For those who think so, I leave it to them to make that case. So far they have not.[13]

Many years ago I read an article Trotsky wrote toward the end of his life about the role of the individual in history.[14] The focus was Lenin—his indispensability to the outcome in October. Only now, after plowing through what was necessary to write this book, can I fully appreciate his claim. In the grand scheme of things, as Trotsky the historical materialist argued, socioeconomic-political conditions are indeed decisive in explaining history but only, as this investigation makes all so clear, if there is someone willing, in the best sense of the phrase, to take advantage of them. It is indisputable, as the particulars of the Russian Revolution clearly demonstrate, that Lenin was unique in doing so, and no one was better qualified than Trotsky to appreciate that fact. In other words, the subjective factor—leadership and program—is as critical to the outcome of the revolutionary process as are the objective factors.[15]

Toward an Explanation of the Silences

Lenin's political career began in 1893 and ended three decades later in 1923. The period when he was most active in electoral/parliamentary work was from 1905 to 1915—that is, a third of his political life. This fact is registered by his literary output if measured by the number of volumes in the 45-volume English edition of his collected works that covers that decade: volumes 8 to 21, almost a third. A close reading of those 14 volumes reveals that his electoral activities informed the bulk of what he wrote—evidence of how central that work was to his politics. But if it was so "indispensable" to the Bolshevik-led victory in October 1917, as the evidence demonstrates, then what explains the near silences in the literature of both friend and foe about such a copious and easily available (now online) record? As noted in the Preface in *LES1905*, the only writing I know that describes Lenin's electoral strategy (other than what he wrote) is *Lenin as Election Campaign Manager*, published originally in 1971 by Pathfinder Press. Still in print, the 23-page pamphlet is the best and, unfortunately, only introduction to the topic. That Pathfinder is the publisher is no accident. It is the publishing arm of the US Socialist Workers Party (SWP) that has its origins in the Left Opposition that Trotsky led against Stalin's counterrevolution. Trotsky, a leader of the Third International, coauthored, along with Bukharin and Zinoviev, "Theses on Communist Parties and Parliamentarism," which was adopted by delegates to the Second Congress in 1920. The document distilled and codified the lessons Lenin drew on not only the Russian but the Western European

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experience as well. The pamphlet acknowledges its roots in the "Theses" as well as the counsel that Trotsky, until his assassination in 1940, provided to fledgling parties such as the SWP that were inspired by the Bolshevik-led revolution. Therein lay in these facts a possible explanation of the silences, at least for Lenin's "friends."

Unlike what Trotsky sought to achieve, parties that took their lead from Moscow after the Popular Front strategy became de rigueur after 1935 placed proletarian revolution on the back burner. The priority now was making alliances with the "progressive" or "national" bourgeoisies of various countries, in the name of fighting fascism. Lenin's critique of such forces and his alternative—independent working-class electoral and parliamentary action—were now politically inconvenient. This had major implications for his writings in the hands of the growing Stalinist bureaucracy in worldwide pursuit of Popular Fronts. The vast majority of humanity would be introduced to him in his own words through what Moscow packaged—the various editions of his "selected" works. The daunting 45-volume complete works made such briefer editions popular. A close reading of them reveals that only one of Lenin's numerous writings on electoral politics, *Left-Wing Communism*, ever found its way into such collections, probably because it was too significant to be ignored and could be misread through a Popular Front lens. Also telling is that while Moscow put together numerous editions of selected writings of his on all kinds of topics, it never saw the need to do one on his electoral strategy.

Even with the collapse of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies, most of its one-time global affiliates still subscribe to the Popular Front strategy, the US Communist Party's continuing embrace of the Democratic Party being the prime example. Beijing, a Stalinist rival to Moscow after 1960, had its own version of the Popular Front strategy, the "bloc of four classes," and it too had no interest in promoting the real Lenin. Just as social democracy had no interest in publicizing the real Marx and Engels through such works as the *Address of March 1850* or the *Circular Letter of 1879*, Stalinism, in both incarnations, did the same for Lenin and for the same reason. Revolutionary electoral and parliamentary work a la Marx and Engels and later Lenin was incompatible with the opportunism of the former and the class-collaborationist orientation of the latter.

Only with the advent of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 did a major challenge to the Popular Front policy come into being. Unlike the movement that Mao Zedong led, Fidel Castro's July 26 Movement did not have roots in the Stalinist counterrevolution. In fact, it declared itself to the world an opponent of the class-collaborationist politics of Moscow

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and its affiliates in Latin America. The Second Declaration of Havana, issued at the beginning of 1962, in a not-too-subtle criticism of the modus operandi of the "communist" parties in Latin America, proclaimed that "in many countries of Latin America revolution is inevitable. The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution . . . it is not for revolutionaries to sit in the doorways of their houses waiting for the corpse of imperialism to pass by. The role of Job doesn't suit a revolutionary." This and other pronouncements of the young revolution, along with its actions, gave, perhaps unintentionally, the impression that what the Cubans had done, armed insurrection, was the only way forward.[16] Rather than a tactic as in Lenin's hands, it now became a strategy to the exclusion of parliamentary and other legal work.[17] Given the track record of the communist and social democratic parties in Latin America, such an outcome is not surprising. Leaders of Moscow's affiliate in Cuba, for example, served in the government of Fulgencio Batista, the dictator that Castro's July 26 Movement overthrew. If Batista is what legal work led to, then only, as many an aspiring revolutionary understandably inferred, illegal work such as armed struggle should be engaged in. Being unaware of Lenin's alternative—revolutionary parliamentarism—facilitated such conclusions. Only the small number of followers of Trotsky's Left Opposition would likely have known about it, but they didn't have the political weight to make a difference.

There is also a near silence on Lenin's electoral strategy in apparently sympathetic book-length accounts on the Bolsheviks and their leader; the reasons vary.[18] In the first volume, for example, of Tony Cliff's well-known biography, published originally in 1975, *Building the Party: Lenin 1893–1914*, encompassing the years he gave the most attention to that work, there are at best 15 pages on anything having to with the subject in the 200 pages of the 350-page volume covering the period from 1905 to 1915. While 5 pages are devoted to the debate about whether to boycott the Second Duma, and 8 to its deliberations about elections to and Bolshevik participation in the Fourth Duma, the reader would never know that it was Lenin who spent innumerable hours directing the Bolsheviks in winning seats to and participation in the four Dumas. On the other hand, an entire chapter of 10 pages is devoted to "Lenin on Armed Struggle," and there is another of 16 pages with the subtitle "Lenin Learns from Clausewitz."

The electoral lacuna in Cliff's account is not accidental, nor is the emphasis on armed struggle. He was a leader of the British Socialist Workers Party that for most of its history has rejected participation in electoral politics and counterpoises to it direct action such as strikes

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and demonstrations. This was not unlike the stance of the Socialist Revolutionaries who disagreed with Lenin's electoral strategy. Anarcho-syndicalists, Lenin later pointed out, held similar views. Thus Cliff's own politics led him to distort the portrait, certainly for this period of Lenin's life, by understating one dimension of Lenin's practice and overstating the other—contributing to the miseducation of a generation or two of radicalizing youth who were looking for an alternative to the portraitures coming from Moscow.

In Neil Harding's two-volume narrative, *Lenin's Political Thought* (1977–78), the reader learns that early in his political life Lenin "imbibed his life-long regard for proper statistical preparation—an enduring trait in his writings."[19] But Harding provides not one iota of detail to illustrate the point when it came to his electoral/parliamentary work. Neither is there any mention of how Lenin employed that work to realize Harding's also correct claim about the centrality of the worker-peasant alliance to Lenin's politics. Of the 300 pages in the first and relevant volume of his book, at best 15 of them address Duma politics, and within that too-brief treatment Lenin's activities hardly amount to a couple of sentences. His "thought" and action in the electoral arena are evidently of minor interest to Harding.

Alan Woods's *Bolshevism: The Road to Power* (1999) is only a slight improvement over the previous accounts.[20] In the almost 300 pages covering 1905 to 1915, out of 600 pages, 37 are devoted to the Bolsheviks in the four state dumas, mainly the First, the Second, and the Fourth. The reader is able to get a glimpse of Lenin's role as director of the Bolshevik fraction in the Fourth Duma. However, there is nothing about him as election campaign manager in any of the duma elections or his work with the RSDLP fraction in the Third Duma, the longest sitting of all four. As is the case with Cliff, Woods's own politics might explain the inadequate attention to this crucial dimension of Lenin's practice. His organization, the International Marxist Tendency, as far as I can tell, like that of Cliff's, appears not to encourage election campaigns for its affiliates. Its self-description as a "Trotskyist" organization implies that having organic links to Trotsky's Left Opposition does not guarantee fealty to his politics, specifically those for the electoral arena.

More recently, Christopher Read's *Lenin: A Revolutionary Life* (2005), a work that doesn't appear to be connected with any political tendency as far as I can determine, replicates even more so the silencing done by the previous apparently sympathetic accounts.[21] In the relevant section of the three-hundred-page book, about eighty pages, Read manages to generate at best a page about Lenin's interest in Duma activities. And as

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the others do, he's treated as only an observer and never as a participant. Perhaps this had to do with Read being, as he describes himself, first and foremost an academic, a group that in general has little experience in actual political work. His greater attention to ideas in Lenin's biography suggests as much.

This might explain the character of an even more recent biography whose author, Lars Lih, is also an academic. His *Lenin* (2011) is filled with many fascinating and until now unknown facts about the Bolshevik leader.[22] But in the forty pages that cover the period from 1905 to 1915 of its two hundred pages, there are only three and a half pages about the party's parliamentary work—two and a half of which are quite riveting in illustrating Lenin's deep commitment to Duma work. For a biography whose purpose is to make the case for Lenin's emotional connect to his political project, this is an odd omission.[23] Nothing instantiates that tie better than all the time and energy he devoted to electoral and parliamentary work—testimony to his deep conviction in the revolutionary potential of the masses.

The silences of Lenin's "friends" enabled those of his enemies, those who explicitly oppose his perspective and politics—a conspiracy of silence. A survey of some of the most influential texts of that milieu is instructive.[24] Bertram Wolfe's highly acclaimed cold war text, *Three Who Made a Revolution* (1948) is a good place to begin.[25] The 25 pages or so devoted to Lenin's parliamentary work, out of 200 (Trotsky and Stalin are the other two figures around which the 600-page narrative is weaved), is, in general, an accurate distillation of the facts. But along the way Wolfe, as if surprised at what he found, saw the need to add gratuitous remarks that unfortunately soiled what was positive in his brief exposition.[26] His volume had a lot of cachet because it came from a one-time insider—Wolfe had once been a functionary for Moscow—and it introduced the first generation of post–Second World War readers to Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

Following Wolfe, an academic take on Lenin, with all the abstractions that often come with such an enterprise, achieved acclaim. Alfred Meyer's *Leninism* (1957) introduced an entire generation of aspiring academics to the Bolshevik leader.[27] It's a prime example of how not to read Lenin, what Lih calls a "textbook" rendering of him, and what this book consciously rejects. Meyer begins with a set of abstract categories related to Lenin's party activities and for which he claims to distill Lenin's views by drawing on various statements—no more than 5 percent of Lenin's text, if that—uttered at different moments of his political life but without the context. In effect the reader is given a set of conclusions about Lenin that Meyer

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has drawn to serve as premises for reading two historic moments in Lenin's life: the Revolution of 1905 and that of October 1917. Of relevance for purposes here is his assertion that by about 1914 Lenin had rethought his earlier supposed approval of "constitutional democracy" as a means for socialist revolution. This permits Meyer to contend that by then Lenin no longer entertained the possibility of "using both constitutional and unconstitutional means" for waging revolutionary struggles. With such a dubious conclusion—contradicted specifically by Lenin's work in relation to the Third Duma—Meyer could apparently convince himself why his duma work was nonexistent.[28] I count at best two sentences in the 160 pages that cover the relevant period that even hint—both having to do with his opposition to the boycottists and recallists—that Lenin engaged in parliamentary work. The silences are deafening.

A decade later, a storyteller, a journalist this time, took center stage because his biography, with endorsements from the illuminati, won a National Book Award in 1965—Louis Fischer's *The Life of Lenin*. Fischer, apparently a one-time fellow traveler, presented, in contrast to what preceded, a more balanced account for those who were suspicious of the heavy handedness of Lenin's enemies and sought something different. But this made Fischer's rendering all the more insidious. In the fifty relevant pages of his seven-hundred-page work, only five sentences came close to acknowledging that Lenin had been involved in duma work, his opposition to the boycotttists and recallists. Had that been all, Fischer could be accused of merely being a myopic sympathizer. But his specious charge that Lenin's call to dismiss the Constituent Assembly violated majority opinion, which, as discussed earlier, flies in the face of the facts on the ground, revealed only a velvet-gloved foe.[29]

Robert Service's three-volume opus, *Lenin: A Political Life*, published between 1985 and 1995, also came with rave reviews.[30] But he, too, like his predecessors in this category of writers, seems to have suffered from writer's block when it came to Lenin's electoral and parliamentary activities. Loquacious when it came to other issues, especially anything that might have cast a pall of suspicion over Lenin's democratic credentials, Service could only manage to write the equivalent of 13 pages on the subject in the 160 pages dealing with the period, out of a 1,000-page work. What is presented—never, as is true with the other foes, in Lenin's own words—is often tendentious and only occasionally accurate.[31] It's clear from the text and footnotes that Service was thoroughly familiar with Lenin's activities and knew far more than he let on and therefore consciously misrepresented the record.

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Finally, there is Orlando Figes's *A People's Tragedy: A History of the Russian Revolution*, published in 1996 and also an award winner. Unlike the prior writings, it's a synthetic account of the revolution that drew on what was considered the best of the extant original research, making it authoritative in academic circles. In many ways it is quite informative—as some of my references to it demonstrate—as well as being very readable. But if he had his druthers, Figes would have airbrushed Lenin out of the story. Obviously, he couldn't, and when introduced as a protagonist in the nine-hundred-page narrative, Lenin is a "domineering personality," with a "cruel and angry streak," a "putschist" with "dictatorial tendencies" and "a profound mistrust of the revolutionary potential of the masses," and hence a "mistrust of democracy." With such an intro, it's easy to understand now the silences in this genre of the literature—why, as should be clear to any reader of this book, Figes, like Lenin's other enemies, had to conceal Lenin's electoral/parliamentary work. There is not even a hint of it in the relevant section of the narrative; only once, in passing, does his name even appear. Lenin the ogre, the portrait that the Leninological industry had worked long and hard to manufacture, is utterly incompatible with that work. Why would someone who had "a profound mistrust of the revolutionary potential of the masses" spend so much time in the elections to and fraction work in every Duma—certainly after the First—trying to forge a worker-peasant alliance—that is, winning the overwhelming majority to a revolutionary perspective? As long as the facts were concealed—the conspiracy of silence—his literary foes didn't have to explain the disconnect with their portraiture. I also suspect that Lenin's enemies, mainly liberal in composition, hated that he successfully used what they regarded as sacred space, the parliamentary arena, to build a mass revolutionary movement.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, some state archives became accessible to scholars for the first time. One of the latter, the well-known Leninologist Richard Pipes, was able to sift through thousands of the documents and publish (113 in total) those that confirmed his long-standing antipathy for Lenin the "misanthrope" (he didn't reveal what else he had found). Pipes titled his book *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive*.[32] With a touch of sarcasm, I could have used the same title for this book (and with more cause) but with a slightly different subtitle: *From the Not So Secret Archive*.

So What? or, Today's Reality

The question now is whether any of this largely unacknowledged history of Lenin's practice, though interesting and at times fascinating, has any

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relevance for today's activists—certainly the question Lenin would have asked. On occasion, as the close reader has noted, I've suggested that it indeed does. The challenges posed for activists in the "Arab Spring," for example, are not unlike what those who partook in the 1905 Revolution faced. When—one of the critical questions for revolutionary forces in both upheavals—should elections be boycotted or not? And then there is the ever-present "lesser of two evils" conundrum that progressive-minded forces confront in the electoral arena and that Lenin first addressed in the elections to the Second Duma. Do today's Black Hundreds—for example, in the US case, the Republican Tea Partiers—make the today's Cadets—the Democrats—the lesser of two evils? If so, does that mean Lenin would have objected to a bloc with the Democrats and their standard bearer Barack Obama in the recent presidential election just as he did with the Cadets? The present task is to be explicit. What follows can at best be only an introduction to how Lenin's course can inform progressive politics today. A recently published collection of essays conveniently provides an opportunity to do just that.

The Question of Strategy—Socialist Register 2013 is the latest *Socialist Register* annual that in 2010 began to address the then still-unfolding global capitalist crisis. Whereas the previous two volumes sought to explain the crisis, the current one "examines the choices faced by the left today, the models of strategy available to it, and the innovations that are being made by groups as they organize in diverse settings."[33] A premise of the collection is that while a "break from capitalism . . . an insurrectionary rupture might someday be possible, it hardly seems in the realm of possibility anytime in the near future . . . What, then, should an anti-capitalist strategy look like, when capitalism is likely to shape the landscape of social and political struggle, at least for the middle run?"[34] Within that framework, the essays begin with an analysis of the current state of the crisis and then concretize the response of activists in different settings—for example, trade unions and the various occupation movements in the United States, Left parties in Europe, specifically Italy and Greece, and then elsewhere in South Africa and Latin America. Feminist politics is given special attention. It concludes with a return to the "American Left" in historical perspective, Badiou's "idea of communism," and the "state and future of socialism." Scattered throughout the essays are more than passing mention of the Arab Spring, "los indignados" in Spain, and others in struggle. Most useful for purposes here is the editors' intention that the collection be an assessment of "the emergence of new socialist parties in light of the legacy of Leninist and social democratic traditions." Rather than a review, this is an interrogation of the essays through the lens of

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the findings of this book. Particular attention is given to those essays that explicitly raise the question of whether electoral/parliamentary work can be employed for the working class to take state power and embark on socialist transformation.

Lenin versus Leninism

Let's begin with the explicit references to Lenin, the Bolsheviks, the Russian Revolution or some variant, because whether his perspective has currency depends in part on how he is understood in progressive circles today. There are first, as anticipated in the collection's Preface, those that suggest, sometimes in passing, that there was Lenin the historical figure, on one hand, and what came to be known as "Leninism," on the other, and that never perhaps the twain shall meet. Such suspicions, if real, are salutary. In Chapter 3, I also employ "Leninism" to denote his reincarnation in the hands of his embalmer, Stalin. Only in Charles Post's essay, "What Is Left of Leninism? New European Parties in Historical Perspective," is there an attempt, in a few paragraphs, to make that distinction clear.[35] The novice reader to this literature, therefore, who might have missed what Post says could, unfortunately, come away thinking that anything that smacks of the Bolshevik leader's name or anything associated with him such as the Third or Communist International (Comintern) is to be avoided.

As Post explains, "'Leninism' as a distinct organizational theory and practice was invented during the 'Bolshevization' campaign of 1924–25 . . . After 1923, the Comintern leadership imposed what the twentieth-century left has come to know as 'Leninist norms of organization' . . . In the wake of these organizational changes, rank-and-file worker communists lost whatever control they may have exercised over the policies, action and leadership of their organizations." While this is essentially correct, it's important to add that while alive Lenin advised, as already noted in Chapter 3, that once an advanced capitalist country experienced a socialist revolution, "Russia will cease to be a model and will once again become a backward country (in the 'Soviet' and the socialist sense)." Extraordinary measures taken to defend the revolution, he also pointed out, were specific to Russian conditions: "We do not propose," again, "our Constitution as a model for other countries."

While "the 'Bolshevization' campaign" was largely an affair of Stalin, it had its roots in the Third Congress of Comintern in 1921, specifically the Theses on the Organizational Structure of the Communist Parties that it adopted. They detailed how party affiliates should organize themselves.

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"The resolution is an excellent one," Lenin told delegates at the Fourth Congress the next year, "but it is almost entirely Russian . . . too Russian, it reflects Russian experience. That is why it is quite unintelligible to foreigners, and they cannot be content with hanging it in a corner like an icon and praying to it."[36] A few months before it was adopted, the Russian party voted at its Tenth Congress to suspend the long-standing Bolshevik party norm of the right to form factions—groupings in the party that disagreed with a party line and wanted a change of leadership. The context was the recently concluded civil war and a number of internal party debates that threatened a split. Given the reality of state power in 1921 and the hostile international environment, a permanently split or destroyed Bolshevik party would probably have resulted in the overthrow of the revolution. Although seen as a temporary measure, it became a permanent norm—a key weapon in Stalin's rise to power.

Writing 14 years later, Trotsky, who continued to defend the measure, was realistic: "But one thing is absolutely clear: the banning of factions brought the heroic history of Bolshevism to an end and made way for its bureaucratic degeneration."[37] Notably, the ban on factions did not suspend debate and democratic discussion; that came with the triumph and consolidation of the Stalin clique. But the suspension of factions found its way into the Theses and this is no doubt what Lenin meant when he said, "[W]e made a big mistake with this resolution." Trotsky later recognized the consequences of extending the Bolshevik party norm to "the young sections of the Comintern, thus dooming them to degeneration before they had time to grow and develop."[38] His *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937) remains the best explanation of what unfolded both in and outside the Soviet Union. A degenerated Comintern allowed Stalin to impose the class-collaborationist Popular Front policy, which had, as Post notes, "a *lasting* political and *social* impact on the communist parties of Europe." They basically became social democrats in communist garb, thus explaining their political nullity today in the face of the capitalist crisis. As this book contends, there was nothing in Lenin's politics and practice prior to the October Revolution—Chapter 2 in *LES1905* is especially useful in this regard—that could have predicted the Stalinist outcome. Historical contingency, rather than some "character defect" or other "smoking gun" or "skeleton" hiding in his background—as his detractors are prone to look for—explains better the counterrevolution.

If Post is essentially correct about the Stalinist corruption of Lenin's program, his own claims about the real Lenin and the Bolsheviks are problematic. First, his description of Leninist organizational norms as being "the construction of an organization of revolutionary worker

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activists *independently* of the labor and parliamentary officialdom capable of contesting the latter's leadership of the workers' movement" is a reading through the lens of the West European social democratic experience and its reformist outcome. For Lenin, as the details of the Third and Fourth Duma experience make quite clear, the emphasis was on how to ensure *subordination* of the parliamentary work to the will of the party and thus its rank-and-file members. The reason for this misreading of the Bolshevik experience is revealed two pages earlier in the essay, the second problem. With Lars Lih as a reference point, Post offers an explanation for why the Russian movement didn't succumb to opportunism like its fraternal organizations in Western Europe. The reason was "the absence of parliamentary institutions and legal trade unions in Russia."[39] The Russians, it seems, had fewer opportunities to be politically compromised.

Only unawareness of Lenin's practice between 1905 and most of 1917 could inform such a claim. Not only were "parliamentary institutions" in place in Russia, with all their limitations, but the opportunist response that characterized the Western European parties found an echo there—the Mensheviks. This, in fact, is exactly the point that Lenin made in his *Left-Wing Communism—An Infantile Disorder*. Disputing would-be revolutionaries in countries where bourgeois democracy was more advanced than what had existed in Russia and who thought, therefore, that the Russian experience was inapplicable to their countries, Lenin begged to differ. Most of them, like Post evidently, didn't know about the decade-long electoral/parliamentary work the Bolsheviks had engaged in—true, he acknowledged, under very different circumstances than those in the Western Europe. But after February, certainly, Russia became the "freest country in the world," where bourgeois parliamentarism with all its opportunist pitfalls flourished. The bourgeois democratic Provisional Government, local dumas, and the soviets all confronted the Bolsheviks with the same challenges West European revolutionaries faced. The decisive difference was the presence of a Lenin—what the pamphlet could only imply. Lih's work, as discussed in the previous section, though admirable because of its rich textual analysis, is bereft of any details about Lenin's electoral/parliamentary work—one of the consequences of relying, as Post does, on the writings of Lenin's "friends," in this case one that covers a limited period in his political life.

Of the 21 contributions in the *Socialist Register* collection, only 2 explicitly embrace Lenin or at least claim to, implying that apparently informed voices of the "anti-capitalist left" find it hard to disentangle Stalinism from the real Lenin. With the attention-getting title, "Occupy Lenin," Mimmo Porcaro boldly declares that the crisis "rings in, once

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again, *the hour of Lenin*. . . if its eruption brings us back to Marx, its momentary 'solution' brings us to Lenin. That is, it brings us to the need to put classes, their struggle and the state at the centre of analysis and to imagine a social alternative that can no longer be just a corrective for the deeply ingrained responsibility of proposing a new and coherent mode of production." Porcaro is described by the editors as "a grassroots union activist in Turin and a member of Rifondazione Comunista," or the Italian Party of Communist Refoundation (PRC). As its name suggests, the PRC, founded in 1991 as the Soviet Union was disintegrating, was the product of the regrouping of those parties that once took their lead from Moscow. While many former Stalinist organizations quickly discarded the "communist" label, those who organized the PRC did not, thus why it or at least some of its members can still embrace Lenin—or more correctly, Lenin as they understand him.

Owing to the hardball tactics of capital's response to the crisis (which Pocaro rightly says renders increasingly null and void the once in-vogue claims of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri)[40]—namely, capital's willingness to employ the "*heavy weapons* of *economic blackmail* and of *political force*"—"it is the general headquarters of capital and the state that must be seized." That makes the current situation a "Lenin moment," but not because of the "answers" that Lenin provided as embodied in "this or that thesis" on "imperialism," the "dictatorship of the proletariat," "the party," and "communism." Rather, it was how he responded to crises such as 1905 and 1917, his "style . . . that can be summed up as *continuous and constant change* in relation to the *given situation*. Lenin is the continuous redefinition of the given situation on the basis of the dynamic of the class struggle and of the spaces which open up from time to time, or which become closed, to the activism of the popular movement . . . Lenin, therefore, is a continuous *movement of rupture* in the face of convictions, of political lines and of organizational forms, which, having matured in a preceding situation, tend by inertia to repeat their problems and solutions and therefore to remain prisoners of the old class relations."

Porcaro's claim about Lenin's "style," one of "continuous rupture," is a reading of the Bolshevik leader at the level of appearances, not essences. Yes, it's true, as documented in this book, that he was often at logger heads with his comrades, many times in the minority, on one occasion even brought up on charges of indiscipline, and constantly challenging routinism. But his "ruptures" were informed by a steel core that went back to Marx and Engels, as this book hopefully makes clear—independent working-class political action. If Porcaro doesn't think there was such a

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core or, perhaps, disagrees with it and thinks it's no longer relevant in today's world, he should say so.

Because Porcaro says "this is no place" to argue about the supposedly out-of-date character of the "answers" Lenin provided, what he calls "this or that thesis," it is difficult to know what he means. If he is referring to the theses codified by Comintern before its Stalinization, then that requires a discussion. For example, there is the much-maligned—owing to "friend" and foe—dictatorship of the proletariat, a valid claim based on the actual history of the revolutionary process that the working class on the road to power and in power will have to impose its will by any means necessary. Unless Porcaro, who acknowledges the "hard power" capital is willing to employ today—in fact, its dictatorship—thinks capital will behave differently from its forbearers whenever they are defeated (i.e., by resorting to any means necessary to try to regain power), again, he should say so and try to make a persuasive case. Otherwise he inadvertently and unnecessarily disarms in advance the victorious proletariat from defending its conquest. No more tragic example in modern history exists of what happens when such a line is advanced—that the working class can take power disarmed, let alone to defend it—as Allende's Chile.[41]

But it is the party question that is most problematic in my opinion in Porcaro's "'Lenin moment' but without Lenin's 'answers.'" While he is rightly suspicious of those who, in reaction to "the party" that "has all too often given a poor account of itself," offer in place "diverse and autonomous 'movement institutions,'" what he proposes is unconvincing. Can he really be serious about "*Jacobin* . . . sects, germs perhaps of oligarchic or semi-authoritarian regression . . . political-intellectual groups" as an alternative given the track record of what's been done in the name of "Leninist vanguardism"? Perhaps a real and honest discussion about the modus operandi of the Italian Communist Party from which the PRC came took place, but what Porcaro proposes suggests that it did not. It never came to terms with its Stalinist past, a recognition that its "Leninist" norms had nothing to do with the real party that Lenin led, making the PRC understandably vulnerable to the criticisms of those who were right to be suspicious of "Leninism." The purpose of Chapter 2 in *LES1905* was exactly that, to recover the real Lenin from the beginning regarding his democratic credentials in both electoral/parliamentary matters and the revolutionary party. Again, there is nothing in that record that would have anticipated the Stalinist counterrevolution in his name—why a historical contingency argument is more convincing. From 1905 until the October Revolution 12 years later (the bulk of this narrative), what is striking is how the Bolsheviks were willing to risk life, limb, and

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imprisonment to have democratic debate, discussion, and a vote under the most difficult circumstances, unlike any other party in Russia, the liberal Cadets included.

Toward the end of his essay, Porcaro, almost in passing, recognizes the horrors of Stalinism, or more accurately, recognizes that others do so but says "we are not dealing with them here." This is in fact the political problem of a contribution that purports to make a case for embracing Lenin. Unless the crimes of Stalin are addressed and dealt with, even if only in an abbreviated fashion, such an effort will be for naught. Generations that have no idea what the real Marx, Engels, and Lenin stood for, but who've been reared on ruling-class narratives about the Stalinist counterrevolution—and that's exactly what it was—require a real and honest discussion about all the horrors that have been done in their names. It can't be swept under the rug. If this is the *Socialist Register*'s case for the Leninist alternative, then it's at best inadequate. Socialism and much that has been done in its name faces a similar challenge. The radicalization of Ayman Al-Zawahiri, Al Qaida's intellectual author, is as much a reaction to the homegrown Arab Socialism of Gamal Abdul Nasser and his successor Anwar al-Sadat as it was to the colonial/Western imperialism legacy. Because the ruling parties in Mubarak's Egypt and Ben Ali's Tunisia draped themselves in a socialist mantle, a real socialist alternative will also have to come to terms with both histories if they are to be persuasive.

Lenin's advice to the international delegates at the Fourth Congress of Comintern in 1922 bears repeating—that is, the need for them to carefully study the Russian Revolution. The history of Bolshevik organizational norms, as this book recounts, was very much a work in progress. The Organizational Theses of 1921 were an attempt to codify those practices for aspiring revolutionaries elsewhere. If Porcaro's point is that those norms were not set in stone, he's right. But is he talking about tweaking them to reflect new conditions or getting rid of them all together and starting over again? I disagree if the latter. If he is right about the "hard power" capital is prepared to use against the working class, which I think he is, then Lenin's trenchant point made in 1913 against those who thought that it wasn't necessary to have an illegal party, the liquidators, is as relevant now as then: "[W]ithout an organization the working class is nothing." Porcaro is right that at some moment there will be a need to seize "the general headquarters of capital." But does he really believe that can be done without a party, a disciplined one? Is the norm of democratic centralism, the real and not Stalinist-distorted one, obsolete?

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Pocaro is rightly impressed with what Lenin did in 1917. Does he not recognize that was due precisely to Bolshevik prior organizational experience? No insight of Lenin's is as important today as his claim in 1902—what informed his *What Is to Be Done?*—that unless a revolutionary leadership already exists before the proverbial "shit hits the fan," it would be too late to try to form one in the heat of the battle. The two martyrs of Germany's failed revolution in 1918, Rosa Luxemburg, who disagreed in 1904 with Lenin's organizational perspective, and Karl Liebknecht, tragically confirm his insight. Just ask the progressive forces in Egypt and Tunisia today about what happens when you don't have an organization in place to compete with forces such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists who had been organizing beforehand—for decades in the case of the former. The best to be hoped for in both settings is that the space that was opened with the Arab Spring will last long enough—which requires fighting for it—for the working class and its allies to get its act together. The Russian example demonstrates that the revolutionary process often comes in different chapters that can spread over a number of years, enough time to organize for the next chapter—if you're lucky.

Of all the contributions in the *Socialist Register* collection, Atilio Borom's "Strategy and Tactics for Popular Movements in Latin America" speaks most directly to the rationale for this book. Borom, currently Director of the Latin American Program of Distance Education in Buenos Aires, is a highly respected and keen observer of progressive and revolutionary politics in the region. He begins by underscoring the political toll that Hardt and Negri's *Empire* took on progressive forces in the first decade of the millennium, leading many to incorrectly believe that strategy, tactics, and the need to take state power were all unimportant. Instead, it was all about social movements in their creative spontaneity, the "multitude." The current capitalist crisis that began at the end of 2007 has exposed the vacuity of that apolitical perspective, again as some of us predicted.[42] Borom notes that the collapse of the Soviet Union, the entrenchment of state capitalism in China and Vietnam, and the concessions to capitalism the Cubans were forced to make in the wake of the Soviet demise to maintain the basic foundations of their revolution all help to explain why the social-movement model became appealing. He acknowledges a positive for the model: "To some extent it could be said that social movements were able to break out of the straitjacket of electoral politics, something that could also be labeled the 'electoral cretinism' of political parties on the left . . . [I]f the leftist parties want to change the world and not only denounce its evils, much more than an adequate electoral strategy is in order."[43]

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Borom then makes the case for the necessity of strategy, because the "heroism and militancy" often associated with the social movements is "not enough," and he employs Lenin for support. He disputes the "postmodernist left" and "traditional social democratic" view of Lenin as a Blanquist or putschist. Unlike what Blanqui stood for, "small conscious minorities at the head of the mass lacking consciousness," quoting Engels's criticism, "Lenin's theory is exactly the contrary; the party, and the leadership, must first gain the confidence of the crowds and only then launch the revolutionary attack." And the other lesson from Lenin, his "classic dictum: 'without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement,'" will be crucial in finding "the route to arrive at the haven of the good post-capitalist society."

In concluding, Borom calls for an end to the unproductive dichotomy between the two perspectives currently in vogue: "[I]f parties narrow their political range of choices when only engaged in the electoral arena, then social movements suffer the same consequences when they refuse to develop an institutional strategy to come to power while at the same time refusing to address a mass insurrectionary strategy to conquer state power. This is the worst of all possible outcomes: neither an institutional road nor an insurrectionary road. The result: the perpetuation of bourgeois rule."[44] The solution to the either/or dilemma that he has correctly diagnosed is exactly what this book has detailed—Lenin's strategy of revolutionary parliamentarism. It's obvious that Borom has some familiarity with Marx and Engels's views on the topic around the 1848–49 upheavals. "Electoral cretinism," for example, is, of course, their "parliamentary cretinism." But it's also obvious that he isn't familiar with Lenin's record; otherwise he would have employed it as he has done with Lenin's other insights. Through electoral and parliamentary work, in both the dumas and soviets, the Bolsheviks were able to realize precisely what he calls "Lenin's theory": to "gain the confidence of the crowds" in order to successfully "launch the revolutionary attack" in October.

In calling for an "insurrectionary strategy," Borom stands out among the *Socialist Register* contributors and hence provides an opportunity to broach a topic that others may have been wary of—armed struggle. As detailed in Chapters 2 and 3 in *LES1905*, armed struggle for Lenin was a tactic and not a strategy, only one of various means for working-class ascent, and it had to complement mass work; otherwise it could become counterproductive. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)—the more than four-decade-old guerrilla movement in Colombia—is Exhibit A for what's wrong when armed struggle becomes a strategy. As with everything, Lenin approached armed struggle from a

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class perspective. Soldiers and sailors—but not the police—were for him workers and peasants in uniform. Therefore the revolutionary working-class party had the obligation to see them as potential recruits, and every effort had to be made to do just that. The thirty-some-odd newspapers that both the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks founded for the armed forces in 1905–6 inaugurated more than a decade of such work, and it was the former who were most consistent in doing so and who thus reaped the benefits in October 1917. One of the lessons of October is that successful recruitment of the rank and file of the military to the revolutionary cause helps minimize the amount of bloodshed in taking state power.

There is no reason to assume that Lenin's perspective is any less relevant today. Egypt's edition of the Arab Spring illustrates what happens—taking into account the particularities of civil-military relations in the country—when most of the rank and file in the military sympathizes with the masses in the streets. What's required there now, as elsewhere, is a conscious campaign along the lines of Lenin's perspective to ensure that the unplanned becomes planned and not be left to chance as was the case when the events in Tahrir Square erupted. Syria illustrates tragically what happens when there is no plan. For the United States, such planning will have to take into account that there are far more arms in civilian hands than in those of military personnel. And at a certain moment in the insurrectionary process, the most elemental and consequential task will be to make sure that the vast majority of those 290 million arms are pointed in the right direction.

The editors of the *Socialist Register* collection may be right that an "insurrectionary rupture . . . hardly seems in the realm of possibility anytime in the near future" in any of the advanced capitalist countries affected by the crisis (though Lenin, it must be remembered, thought in January 1917 that he wouldn't live to see a successful revolution), but Syria and other sad lessons from history show what happens when no forethought is given to it. The Bolshevik experience, on the other hand, demonstrates that it is the prior work, before things come to a head, that will determine the outcome, and an orientation toward winning over the ranks of the military will be decisive. It's no accident that near the top of the requirements for membership in the pre-Stalinist Comintern—the famous, or infamous, depending on one's politics, "twenty-one conditions"—was the fourth: "The duty to disseminate communist ideas carries with it a special obligation to conduct vigorous and systematic propaganda in the army." In the United States, certainly, where thousands join the military to find employment due to the crisis, many of them tragically and increasingly take their own lives—the shattered hopes of isolated workers. "Vigorous

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and systematic propaganda in the army" can therefore be salutary—basic proletarian solidarity.

The armed-struggle question, by the way, exposes a key problem with the 1 percent versus 99 percent distinction of the occupy movement in the United States. The American ruling class is actually less than 1 percent of the population, but it stays in power owing to the support of various layers of society that number far more than 1 percent (what I like to call "Stephen's people" after the unforgettable head slave on the Candie Land Plantation in Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained*). Not the least important of these layers, aside from the ideological defenders—many of whom are employed by the most prestigious institutions of higher learning—is the military apparatus; again, what makes having a working-class military strategy in place all so important.

APPLYING LENIN'S PERSPECTIVE

The *Socialist Register* collection includes five essays about settings in which independent working-class political action in the electoral/parliamentary arenas is not just a theoretical possibility but is being posed today to one degree or another: Greece, Italy, Germany, South Africa, and Bolivia. The task now is to see if any of what this book details speaks to the realities those essays reveal about the current situation in each nation.

In no country has the crisis so exposed the bankruptcy of social democracy as in Greece. Pasok was the ruling party that obediently carried out the orders of European bankers to implement drastic austerity measures against the Greek working class beginning in 2010. Most emblematic is the fact that the then prime minister, George Papandreou, was also the president of the Socialist International, the rump that was left of the Second International after the First World War. (It's worth noting that the ruling parties of both Mubarak in Egypt and Ben Ali in Tunisia were, before being dethroned, affiliates of the same body.) Pasok was not alone in the social democratic offensive against workers in Europe. In Iceland, Portugal, and Spain, the same was happening. So much, then, for the so-called parliamentary road to socialism thesis—a fraud exposed by Marx, Engels, and Lenin long ago. The two important political lessons of the twentieth century, taught respectively by social democracy and Stalinism, are that the capitalist state cannot be used to construct socialism and that socialism can't be constructed on the backs of the proletariat.

With the political collapse of Pasok in 2012, owing to the electorate's rejection of its proausterity policies, and the continuing nullity of the traditional Stalinist party, the possibility of a real working-class alternative

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was seriously posed for the first time in Greece. For many anticapitalist activists, that option appeared to be embodied in the coalition of left parties known as Syriza, which understandably garners the most attention in the collection—two articles exclusively and one partially. Syriza came within 2.8 percent of becoming the ruling coalition (though officially a "party" for the sake of the elections) in the general election in June 2012, winning 27 percent of the vote; with 71 of the 300 seats in the Greek parliament, it is the major opposition coalition to the ruling bloc headed by New Democracy in alliance with another capitalist party and the spent Pasok as a junior partner. The two contributions in the *Socialist Register* collection that deal just with Syriza come from two leading intellectuals intimately involved in the day-to-day activities of the coalition, one as an essay and the other an interview, by Michalis Spourdalakis and Aristides Baltas, respectively. Both provide useful background about the coalition, its evolution, the situation it faced in the spring of 2012 and the way forward. The interview with Baltas has a bit of the feel of high drama in that it took place on the eve of the June general election when it was very possible that Syriza would win and become the new governing party/coalition.

From the vantage point of this book, the most promising thing about the two presentations is that both Spourdalakis and Baltas agree that there is a history that Syriza needs to come to grips with if it is to be true to its professed goals. For Spourdalakis, "Socialism needs once again to be put on the political agenda. But strategizing for socialism in the twenty first century requires a critical evaluation of all the previous efforts as they were historically articulated by all traditions—from the Fabians to the Leninists." And for Baltas, "[W]hat we consider extremely important for Greece and perhaps for the whole of Europe is the need to have a big discussion of the fate of socialism in the twentieth century, why it failed in China and why it failed in Eastern Europe . . . the feeling runs quite deep here that the left should reply as to the why of such failures . . . This involves going as far back as it takes through Lenin and Trotsky and Stalin so if even we perhaps make new mistakes, we surely do not [sic] to repeat the old ones."[45]

Such openness to a real discussion about this history is potentially salutary because, to paraphrase Trotsky's insight about the parties that joined the Third International or Comintern after Moscow imposed its line, Syriza was born with a birth defect; it carries the two genes of Stalinism and social democracy. That's clear in not only the two accounts about Syriza's origins between 2002 and 2004 but what the authors themselves have to say about that heritage. While acknowledging its parentage,

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Syriza, according to Spourdalakis, is "leaving behind both the reformism of a bankrupt social democracy and the vanguardism of revolutionaries still dreaming of the storming of the winter palace. It hopes in this way to bridge the gap between reform and revolution and to define the radical transformation of capitalist society as a process of structural reforms directly connected to everyday struggles." To the question posed by Leo Panitch, one of the editors of the collection, about how Syriza would avoid the pitfalls of European social democracy given Syriza's "electoral path," Baltas responds that "our party members are incapable of wanting a social democratic party of the European variety. They are too aware of what Pasok did: despite its ideological agenda and its rhetoric, once it entered the state within a short period it instituted clientelism at a level not approached before and immersed itself in corruption of the worst kind . . . The social structure of Greece precludes social democratization of the Northern European type" because of the lack, for the most part, of a second-generation Greek working class. Also, unlike Northern Europe, "intellectuals here are integrated into the left." They would be able to provide the "expertise for running a new kind of state . . . we might even say that if we take the government, then the revolution will start" through the grassroots networks. "So if we reform the government and if we keep, let's say, the left flank [the working class] of our coalition ['the traditional and new petty bourgeoisie' being the other half] absolutely fixed, firm, then things will develop from below in a socialist sense."

The bottom line for both views is that Syriza—according at least to these two intellectuals/participants—believes it can use the capitalist state to carry out socialist transformation—exactly what the best that social democracy had to offer thought it could do and which nowhere, as Marx, Engels, and Lenin confidently predicted, has ever been successful, including southern Europe. That futile quest is what defines social democracy, and the degree of a society's proletarianization doesn't explain why it can become hegemonic. It has to be confronted politically, and that requires clarity about what it actually is. If there is one thing the numerous 24- and 48-hour general strikes in Greece since 2011 (the largest organized by the Pasok-affiliated trade unions) have proven, it's not enough for the masses to come into the streets and demonstrate their anger with the austerity measures of the bourgeois state. At a certain moment, they will have to take power into their own hands to stop the austerity drive and, like the Communards, begin to construct a new kind of state. It may not be a "storming of the winter palace," but it will have to be something comparable. The reader of this book knows that Lenin—again, the real Lenin and not the "Leninist" Lenin—said a

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lot about reforms and revolution, and nothing better captures his position than his point made in the waning months of the revolutionary upheavals of 1905–7: "[W]e must fight in a revolutionary way for a parliament"—that is, reforms—"but not in a parliamentary way for a revolution." What Spourdalakis and Baltas advocate comes close to what he counseled against: the parliamentary road to socialism.

Spourdalakis at least recognizes that to even carry out the "structural reforms" project he envisions requires the "building of a political party," the next and necessary stage in Syriza's coalitional existence. Success in that arena would require, however, a thoroughgoing interrogation of what has passed in Greece for "Leninism" both politically and organizationally. To not do so threatens to reproduce the grotesqueness of the USSR and its Eastern European clones even in the hands of well-intentioned "left" intellectuals. Lenin, like Marx and Engels, fought for a perspective based not on whether they'd actually live to see its execution but one that made the preparations for what could be employed when the necessary conditions existed for its success. That's the difference between "dreaming of the storming of the winter palace" and laying out a course to be ready to do so when the time arises.

Hillary Wainwright's "Transformative Power: Political Organization in Transition" also examines what Syriza has so far achieved but through the experience of two prior left forays into the electoral/parliamentary arenas—the Labour Party's Greater London Council campaign in the 1980s and the Brazilian Workers' Party involvement in the Porto Alegre municipal council between 1989 and 2004. Also an academic, at the University of Bradford in the United Kingdom, hers is an effort about "rethinking political organization beyond both Leninism and parliamentarism"—that is, as I read it, neither Stalinism nor social democracy. The research question she poses, in fact, is similar to what this book asks: "whether the vote is still a resource for social transformation or a perpetual source of disillusion and alienation. In other words, can representation in the existing institutions of parliamentary democracy, along with efforts to change these institutions, strengthen the wider struggle to bring somehow an end to capitalist power—the power of the financial markets, private banks and corporations, all intertwined with and guaranteed by state institutions?"[46] Of all the contributions in the *Socialist Register* collection, Wainwright's essay, therefore, speaks most directly to the specifics of this book.

The answer to her question, she says, is a conditional yes based "on an understanding of citizenship as social and situated. In today's societies, ridden as they are with inequalities, this implies an engagement with electoral politics while at the same time strongly challenging what has become

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of the universal franchise: an abstract, formal political equality in a society that is fundamental unequal." The experiences of the forays of the Labour Party and Workers' Party, which resulted in some redistribution of resources at the local level, "illustrate a transition from socialist change as centered around the state to an understanding of transformative power organized in society." But in many ways, that's exactly the all-important point Marx and Engels made—and Lenin constantly employed—with their notion of "parliamentary cretinism": the mistaken assumption that the alpha and omega of politics is the legislative arena. Rather, they all understood that decisive in politics is what takes place outside that arena, what social democracy denies to its peril.

Wainwright is right to call for a "rethinking of the franchise," and Marx, Engels, and Lenin can be of assistance. The necessary complement today to "parliamentary cretinism," coined originally by Engels in 1849, might be called "voting fetishism"—that is, the modern but erroneous tendency to equate the right to register a preference for either a candidate or a policy in a public election with the actual exercise of political power. Stating a preference should never be mistaken for taking power; the consequences can be life threatening, because it can be literally disarming. There are two characteristics of voting that, if thought about, should disabuse anyone of such confusion. An electoral vote, in the ordinary sense of the term, is an action that is, first, usually private and, second, doesn't take much time—nothing that could be more remote from the exigencies of taking political power. Neither is a political demonstration—as the Greek masses frustratingly learn—the same as taking power; it's just that, a demonstration of preferences, though certainly more advanced than voting because it's public.[47] Exactly because Marx and Engels didn't confuse registering preferences with taking power could they put forward a strategy—elaborated on to effective usage by Lenin—that didn't subscribe to the either/or dilemma that Wainwright seeks an exit from—that is, take part in the electoral process and risk being compromised a la social democracy or boycott it and risk irrelevancy a la anarchism. Not only could elections be useful for propaganda purposes, to disseminate revolutionary ideas, but they offered revolutionaries an excellent opportunity to count preferences in order to determine the most propitious moment for actually taking power—"for storming the winter palace."

The Paris Commune allowed Marx and Engels to supplement their electoral strategy with the only addendum they ever made to the *Communist Manifesto*, an insight that anticipated what Wainwright came to recognize based on the London and Porto Alegre experiences. "We noted how actually existing parliamentary democracy effectively tends to occlude and

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reinforce inequalities of wealth and power unless directly challenged . . . entrenched institutions which take as given and as beyond their responsibility the inequalities and problems against which these struggles and the electoral mandate are directed." That's precisely the reality the insurgent Communards encountered, which is why they had to—a lesson that Lenin absorbed to the very core of his political being—not just challenge the status quo but construct a new state institution, what Russian workers discovered on their own in 1905 and repeated later in 1917: soviets. Unlike the French National Assembly and the Czarist State Duma, the Commune and the Soviet of Workers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies fused the legislative and executive functions of governance. Owing to his participation in Swiss politics during his many years in exile there—one of the surprises of the research for this book—Lenin learned that even the most transparent bourgeois parliamentary institution would "occlude and reinforce inequalities of wealth and power," especially as long as those two functions were separated. Wealth could exercise its influence in the walled-off executive branch / state bureaucracy that had a life of its own independent of the parties that happened to be ruling parliament and thus the government.

Like Spourdalakis, Wainwright thinks that Syriza will have to transform itself into a "political party" if it is to be effective at all. Not only, she says, would such a party have to be actively engaged with "extra-parliamentary" work, but it would "require specific organizational forms to counter the pressures drawing representatives into the flytrap of parliamentary politics, with all of its tendencies towards a separate political class." What Wainwright is raising is related to the problem Marx and Engels detected as early as 1879 in German social democracy: the tendency for the parliamentary group to want to be less accountable to the rank-and-file members of its parent party. One of the important tests for Syriza as it goes forward and becomes, perhaps, a party is whether the parliamentary group, now headed by the charismatic Alexis Tsipras, will be willing to subordinate itself to the decisions, arrived at by Leninist and not Stalinist methods, of the party. Based on everything that the three contributions say about Syriza, I'm skeptical that will happen. Whatever the case, Lenin gave a lot of thought to this potential problem with parliamentary work and proposed a number of solutions to arrest its development. Once again, Wainwright's otherwise thoughtful analysis could have benefited tremendously from what Marx, Engels, and Lenin bequeathed.

It's commendable that Wainwright wants to draw on the lessons of history to estimate Syriza's chances for a real socialist transformation. But the fact is that the only example of a revolutionary movement employing the

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electoral/parliamentary arena to lead the working class to state power—which she readily admits never happened with social democracy a la the Labour Party or Workers' Party despite some success with the local "experiments"—is what the Bolsheviks under Lenin's leadership accomplished in 1917. Lenin's revolutionary parliamentarism offers another valuable lesson that all three contributions apparently assign low priority to—proletarian internationalism. As Wainwright points out, "the full development of both experiments was curtailed by the impact on parties of labour of the global momentum of neoliberalism." That's no surprise and exactly why Marx, Engels, and Lenin rejected the notion of socialism in one country and saw the need for an international body of workers that could provide solidarity to one another in their struggles against capital. If that was a necessity in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, it's even truer today. The ability of capital to impose its will on workers in Greece and elsewhere is aided and abetted by the absence of such solidarity. Perhaps in their desire to distance themselves from the "Leninist" Comintern, the three contributors have avoided this all-important issue. But that comes with a price. The lack of international working-class solidarity and a perspective on how to achieve it also aids and abets the nationalist response to the crisis, which in Greece has already taken a significant fascist turn—namely, Golden Dawn.

A final observation about the Greek case—both Spourdalakis and Baltas mention the anarchists but without any sustained discussion. An observation Lenin made about anarcho-syndicalism in 1912 is still relevant. The anarchists, he argued, were given a new lease on life at the beginning of the twentieth century precisely because of the increasingly opportunist character of social democratic parties in European parliaments. Revolutionary parliamentarism, he contended, would obviate the need for them. In this regard, Baltas's comment that despite their rejection of the state and traditional parties "almost all of the anarchists are actually voting . . . for Syriza" is instructive.[48] It would take us too far afield to fully dissect that fact—assuming its correct—but suffice it to say that as long as Syriza appears as a real and viable socialist alternative then the anarchist response is not surprising. Once in office, however, the story is likely to be very different given its problematic parentage.[49] Lenin's constant egging of the liberal Cadet party in the first and second state Dumas, "what thou doest, do quickly"—that is, take power and reveal yourselves so that the masses might learn—might apply, therefore, to Syriza.

Two other European countries have parties that share a similar history with Syriza: Die Linke [The Left] in Germany and the already mentioned Party of Communist Refoundation (PRC) in Italy. The former came into

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being in 2005, composed mainly of the reinvented Stalinist party of East Germany and left dissidents from the Social Democratic Party. The PRC was a similar reincarnation in 1991 but just of the Communist Party of Italy. Like Syriza, both were deformed at birth owing to their origins and thus suffer from the same problems it does. Stephen Hellman's "Whatever Happened to Italian Communism? Lucio Magri's *The Tailor of Ulm*" unintentionally shows why for the PRC an honest discussion about its Stalinist history never took place. The assessment in the aforementioned contribution of Charles Post is useful: "Despite their claims to be 'post-social democratic' and 'post-Leninist' . . . and [d]espite the purported programmatic differences—the PRC's 'anti-capitalism' and *Die Linke*'s anti-neoliberalism—both parties proved unable to consistently resist the lure of participation in government coalitions with the social liberals with the resulting embrace of austerity at home and imperialist wars abroad. Neither party has transcended the pre-1914 social democratic 'twin pillars' organizational norm where the party focused on electoral politics, while the union officialdom directed the day-to-day class struggle in the workplace and beyond."[50] The revolutionary parliamentarism gene was never a possibility for either.

Two essays in the *Socialist Register* collection focus on particular countries beyond Europe: Susan Spronk's "Twenty-First Century Socialism in Bolivia: The Gender Agenda" and John Saul's "On Taming a Revolution: The South African Case." Both share a commonality—parties in power that claim either a socialist or redistributive agenda or are widely perceived to do so. And in neither case has that been substantively realized.

Spronk, an academic at the University of Ottawa, describes how the ruling party of President Evo Morales, Movimiento de Socialismo (MAS), since being elected in 2005 has taken important steps toward the recognition of both women and indigenous rights in the still most underdeveloped country in South America. And while some material aid has been directed toward the most impoverished women in Bolivia, it is still inconsequential: "[U]ltimately, cash transfer programmes come nowhere close to providing the kinds of high quality, decommodified public services enjoyed by citizens in revolutionary contexts such as Cuba."[51] That admission is revealing and instructive. It explains in part why she argues "agrarian reform and food sovereignty—the existing demands of Bolivia's most radical [peasant] women's movements—should be seen as part of the agenda for gender justice." A "socialist-feminist agenda," in other words, "must center on a fundamental transformation of the social relations of production." MAS, then, has yet to do what the Bolsheviks and, later, the Cubans did (in both cases within two years of taking power):

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complete the bourgeois democratic revolution with a real land reform—in a country that "has amongst the most unequal distribution of land in the region"—and embark on the road to socialist transformation. It's not clear if MAS ever inherited a social democratic gene, but it acts as if it did so. Like Marx and Engels, Lenin believed that the test of any society and revolution is the progress women have made. In Evo Morales's Bolivia, it's been so far more about appearances than substance, and the contrast with Cuba is telling. The danger as always with the equivocations of those who speak in the name of socialism is that it may convince—as discussed earlier about the lessons that revolutionaries in Latin America mistakenly drew about the Cuban Revolution—a new generation of would-be revolutionaries that there is nothing to be gained in utilizing electoral/parliamentary spaces.

John Saul, a longtime and highly respected commentator on and participant in the Southern African liberation movement and now professor emeritus of York University, seeks to explain why South Africa's ruling African National Congress, in power since 1994, has also apparently equivocated, presiding over a "disappointing path to the present." To answer that question, he expertly distills the history of the antiapartheid struggle to understand what he sees as the key moments and actors that account for the "taming of the revolution" and "jettisoning the more elaborate dreams of a socialist future." For some of us, however, who had long supported the liberation struggle in South Africa, we began in the mid-1980s to reassess the character of its revolution based on a closer reading of Lenin and concluded that what was on the agenda was not—as many of us assumed and/or hoped—a socialist revolution but rather a bourgeois democratic one and that the African National Congress (ANC) was capable and committed to leading that course. And unlike most of the grassroots activists of that era, Saul's real heroes and heroines, the ANC had a nose for state power, the necessary ingredient for uprooting the state-sponsored and enforced system of apartheid—and hence an important lesson for today's activists who dismiss the importance of state power. Its main programmatic statement, the Freedom Charter of 1955, was about a radical democratic revolution, and not—as some of us were prone to read it—a program for socialist revolution (just as Nelson Mandela explained a few months after it was adopted). A thoroughgoing bourgeois revolution as Lenin argued, just as Marx and Engels did, was the necessary condition—without a predetermined timetable—for a socialist revolution and thus was to be applauded and supported. With that reassessment, we recommitted to the South African struggle but with more clarity and sobriety.

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From the perspective of that reevaluation, the most recent events in South Africa began to fulfill what we had expected and hoped for. We couldn't predict when it would occur, but we knew that the overthrow of apartheid would put the class question on the agenda, in a similar way that the overthrow of Jim Crow in the United States has done for its class struggle. The unprecedented strikes that began in the summer of 2012 of not only the miners but other workers, especially the rural proletariat farm workers—for the first time in their history—is the most important development since the overthrow of apartheid, without which they could not have occurred as they have.[52] And the fact that the upsurge begins to coincide with protests elsewhere due to the global capitalist crisis—which, too, affects South Africa—makes their timing even more potentially significant. Like in Bolivia, the land question looms large in South Africa—that is, the need for agrarian reform. A worker-peasant alliance is therefore required in both countries, and as Lenin demonstrated in practice, the parliamentary arena can be advantageous for its organization, the kind of space that didn't exist under apartheid. But to do so requires the kind of leadership Lenin and the Bolsheviks provided, and therein is a curious lacuna in Saul's account, the proverbial elephant in the room—the South African Communist Party. Its acronym, the SACP, is employed throughout the essay, but the reader who is new to the South African reality is never informed what it actually stands for.

The SACP, unlike the Bolsheviks, is a product of the Stalinized Comintern, and its more than half-century alliance with the ANC has essentially the character of a Popular Front in the so-called Triple Alliance—the two organizations plus the umbrella labor coalition, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The SACP continues to exercise inordinate weight within it, and it's impossible to understand, for example, the ANC's "modus operandi" or its politics without pointing to the Stalinist influence. The "popular front," the ANC in exile as "a small, elite led, top-down hierarchical party [with] strict democratic centralism . . . characteristic of the Soviet model," and other such scattered references throughout Saul's essay are very much the stuff of Stalinism. History has shown that the most principled of the ANC leaders—Mandela being the best example—were likely to have been imprisoned for many years at Robben Island and therefore were relatively immune from the cynical and corrupting influence that characterized ANC/SACP exile politics.[53] Of the Triple Alliance members, the SACP is the most conscious and ardent defender of its popular front character—what it calls the "national democratic revolution"—and it is therefore the biggest political obstacle to independent working-class politics in South Africa today.

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An honest discussion about Stalinism and the price it cost the antiracist struggle in South Africa has never taken place, despite the pretense that it had.[54] The new upsurge has the potential to dislodge the hegemony of the Triple Alliance and bring into existence a new working-class leadership. Stalinism, especially in a setting like South Africa where unsophisticated anticommunism marked much of the history of its ruling class, could always pose as a viable working-class option as long as it didn't have state power. The more than 15 years that the Triple Alliance has been in power with the finger prints of the SACP all over it threatens to shatter whatever remaining illusions exist about it as a real option—Lenin's constant refrain about the Cadets, "what thou doest, do quickly," comes to mind. That possibility, rather than "disappointment," is what to look forward to and to be optimistic about. The missing elephant in his narrative notwithstanding, Saul is right to see—written before the recent upsurge—"the dawning of the 'next liberation struggle.'"[55]

The US Case

I conclude with the setting that understandably receives the most attention in the *Socialist Register* collection: the United States. Two articles are devoted to the Occupy movement in New York City and Oakland, one to the labor movement, one to the historical significance of the left, and one to socialist feminism in the United States and elsewhere since the crisis. But through the lens of this book, there is relatively less to be said about the US case, at least quantitatively. That's because in the other countries independent working-class political action is currently posed, while in the United States it remains an abstraction. This is still the only advanced capitalist country whose working class lacks its own political party. Engels offered an explanation in 1893: the winner-takes-all electoral system, US economic expansion and the resulting gains for workers (the "American dream"), and the divisions within the working class, especially the black/white and native/immigrant cleavages.[56] In 2003, I argued that owing to the fight to overthrow Jim Crow (i.e., racial segregation), the American working class is more integrated than ever not only racially but also by gender and nationality. That historic conquest, in combination with the crisis of late capitalism—"It's not a question whether . . . recession and depression . . . will come to the shores of the United States but only when"—opened up the possibility for a real working-class alternative for the first time.[57] I stressed that there were only favorable conditions for such an outcome; it wasn't inevitable. And indeed, it has yet to happen.

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What's so telling about Sam Gindin's otherwise informative contribution on the US labor movement, "Rethinking Unions, Registering Socialism," is nary a single word about independent working-class political action. Though there is mention of "the cynical electoral tactics of the Republican Party," there isn't a peep about the cynical prostitution of the labor movement, in collusion with its leaders, by the Democratic Party. The head of a state trade union federation (AFL-CIO) told me in 2011 how, after he expressed dissatisfaction to Vice President Joseph Biden with the Obama administration's lackluster performance on labor, Biden shot back, "What are you complaining about? You know you have nowhere else to go!" The bitter truth is that Biden was right. As long as labor's officials refuse even to consider breaking with the Democrats, it will be exploited to its increasing peril. The most recent defeats at the ballot box, the failure to recall Governor Scott Walker in Wisconsin, and the failure to defeat the right-to-work legislation in Michigan demonstrate the utter bankruptcy of labor's class-collaborationist strategy in the electoral/legislative arenas.[58]

The political nullity of the US labor movement has been long in the making. Eli Zaretsky, a historian at the New School in New York City, argues correctly in his essay "Reconsidering the American Left" that only when there has been what he calls "a powerful, independent radical left" have democratic gains been made. The abolitionist movement constitutes for him the first example—though in fact it was armed white farmers and former slaves who overthrew the slavocracy. But that's a tolerable error. He is profoundly incorrect, however, in claiming that "the Popular Front leftists put social equality" on the political agenda during the Great Depression. Rather, it was the independent mobilizations of the working class between 1933 and 1936, before the US Communist Party began campaigning for Moscow's line, which forced the concessions from the Roosevelt administration known as the New Deal. What the Popular Front actually did was to help housebreak the labor movement by taking it into the debilitating embrace of the Democratic Party, where it has been submissively residing ever since. And not the least treacherous of its consequences was labor officialdom's support for the Roosevelt administration's war drive—in the name of fighting fascism—which obligated it to sign on to no-strike pledges during the Second World War; only the United Mine Workers of America refused to comply, and the Communist Party USA has to this day paid a price in the coal fields for its unsuccessful strike-breaking stance. Precisely because Zaretsky ignores this history can he with a straight face confess that Obama's election in 2008 was an "investment of the American left in a historic Presidency—the first African-American to win the office" and with further naïveté admit that the returns on that investment have

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proved "profoundly disheartening." For Zaretsky, in other words, "an independent radical left" today means cohabitation with a bourgeois party—exactly what Lenin would have soundly denounced and why the Popular Front's champions have no interest in promoting his real program. It's no wonder Zaretsky speculates on the reasons "for the marginalization of the left that began in the 1970s." The dear political price "the left" has paid for being cheerleaders for the Democratic Party doesn't figure into the "complex" explanation he offers.

The labor movement isn't the only casualty of this fatal embrace of the Democratic Party. Though there is no contribution in the collection that explicitly addresses it, the black rights movement—as I also argued in 2003—has suffered a similar fate. And the same goes for the organized movement for women's rights. Joan Sangster and Meg Luxton, in "Feminism, Co-optation and the Problems of Amnesia: A Response to Nancy Fraser," are right to call the renowned feminist theorist on the carpet for believing that Obama's election "could 'signal the decisive repudiation, even in the belly of the beast, of neoliberalism as a political project.'"[59] This is why the Occupy movements in Oakland and elsewhere were right to be suspicious of electoral politics and the Democratic Party leading up to Obama's reelection.[60] But without a revolutionary parliamentarism perspective, that healthy sentiment and energy was bound to be sucked into the black hole of the Democratic Party just as the anarchists in Greece have gravitated toward Syriza.

The biggest political obstacle today to independent working-class political action—not just in the United States—is lesser-evil thinking. Every working-class vote for the lesser-evil bourgeois politician is another step away from building a real working-class alternative. And every vote for a bourgeois politician helps reproduce bourgeois politics. Many a sincere revolutionary in the United States and elsewhere thought that support for Barack Obama over Mitt Romney was in the interest of the international working class. Aside from what the cold facts about the new Obama administration have already revealed—"what thou doest, do quickly"—what such support in fact did, as always with such strategies, was to drain precious time and energy away from what needs to be done. It's impossible to calculate, but much of the energy of the Occupy movements in the United States, with all their strengths and limitations, was siphoned off into the reelection of Barack Obama—a pattern seen with earlier mass movements in the run-ups to presidential elections, such as the Vietnam antiwar movement. The justification is always that failing to support the lesser evil allows the "greater evil," the reactionaries, to win. A major problem with this argument is its lack of clarity about what

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reaction actually is and how it advances. One thing is certain: the logic of capital dictates that unless there is a real working-class alternative, bourgeois politics will keep moving to the right—especially in the context of the still-unfolding crisis. Every delay in the pursuit of independent working-class political action only emboldens reaction.

Confusion about reaction, in US politics in particular, is closely related to confusion about fascism. In the 1906 elections to the Second Duma, Lenin first challenged the lesser-evil "Black Hundred scare"—that is, the claim of the Cadets and their Menshevik cheerleaders that a vote for a RSDLP candidate who had no chance of winning would take votes away from them and enable victory for the most reactionary party in Russia, the Black Hundreds. Fascism as a mass movement was then nonexistent. Present-day lesser-evil advocates might therefore argue that Lenin's objections are no longer relevant in today's world, where such movements are extant, Greece being the prime example. It is hence instructive to note Lenin's point, made in 1922 shortly before his last incapacitating stroke, that "the fascists in Italy" revealed that the Italians were "not yet ensured against the Black Hundreds."[61] It suggests that he saw similarities between both reactionary movements, and for good reason given the infamous pogrom-mongering actions of the latter. Despite the very real danger the Black Hundreds posed—far greater than any Republican Tea Partier who "clings to guns or religion"—Lenin refused to be swayed by the liberals' and fainthearted Mensheviks' "scare" campaign and went on to construct a working-class alternative that took state power in 1917.

Lenin built on the kernel of wisdom Marx and Engels planted in 1850: that the working class should not be deterred by liberals from independent political action just because it might allow "a few reactionaries" to be elected. Beginning in 1906, he wrote a series of articles based on the particulars of the Russian situation that fleshed out the logic of their argument in order to demonstrate its validity. Those writings are largely unknown to the working class, mainly because of the still hegemonic Popular Front policy. Lenin's stance, as the discussion in Chapter 4 in *LES1905* reveals, was not an absolutist one. Under extraordinary circumstances he was indeed willing to bloc with the Cadets to prevent the Black Hundreds from winning Duma seats, but only after the working class had made the most concerted campaign for independent political action. And in the final analysis, Lenin knew that the question of the Black Hundreds, and all such reactionary forces, would be settled only where it effectively could be—in mass militant mobilizations in the streets. Marx and Engels had hinted as much.[62]

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Turning to the real Lenin does not mean there is nothing to add to that rich legacy. But to do so in the most remunerative way requires full knowledge of what he left us—not only his electoral/parliamentary strategy but also the record of his final fight, against the growing cancer that would become Stalinism. Lenin didn't live long enough to see fascism fully developed, but Trotsky did, and no body of writings on the subject is as valuable as his—the kind of analysis that not only failed to take place at the last Comintern congress in 1935 but could not have. An honest discussion would have exposed Stalin's criminal and disastrous line on Germany: "first the fascists, then us." Imposing the Popular Front necessitated the obfuscation of fascism—a problem that remains in most progressive-minded understandings of the phenomenon, its essence, how it came to be hegemonic, and how to fight it.

The noted Marxist scholar Alex Callinicos, in his contribution in the *Socialist Register* collection on the philosopher Alain Badiou, unfortunately repeats the timeworn fable that Marx "tended to assume that the overthrow of capitalism is inevitable."[63] Nothing could be further from the truth. A single sentence from a letter Marx wrote in 1852, no matter how important, cannot make that case. Marx and Engels claimed that class struggle is inevitable once class society appears—a central theme from the outset of part one of their *Communist Manifesto*. But *what's not inevitable is the class struggle's outcome*.[64] Otherwise there would have been no need to compose the manifesto, which is a call to action from beginning to end. Not only did they issue such a call—at the request of the revolutionary party of which they were members—but for the next four decades, until the end of their lives, they waged a concerted campaign to realize its message, so that the working class could have a better than even chance of being victorious. And no one understood their project better or did more to realize it than Lenin. His electoral strategy concretized what they bequeathed. I contend that not only Callinicos but all the contributors to the *Socialist Register* collection would benefit in one way or another from this understanding of Lenin's legacy.

For most of the twentieth century, the center of the world revolutionary process was in the so-called Third World. The unprecedented and still unfolding crisis of global capitalism has shifted the axis of politics to the advanced capitalist world, where there are far more opportunities in the electoral and parliamentary arenas—making Lenin's strategy of revolutionary parliamentarism more relevant than ever. But to realize its potential, it has to be used. This is a contribution toward that end for those who are truly anticapitalist and who not only seek but are willing to fight for a working-class alternative.

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Appendix A

The Fifth (All-Russian) Conference of the RSDLP[1]

December 21–27, 1908; January 3–9, 1909

Practical Instructions on Voting for the Budget by the Social-Democratic Group in the Duma

First Variant

Voting for the Budget as a whole is declared wrong in principle. The Conference is of the opinion that, as regards voting for particular items in the Budget, the Duma group should be guided by the principle of our program that Social-Democrats firmly reject reforms involving tutelage of the police and the bureaucracy over the working classes. Therefore the general rule should be to vote against particular items of the Budget, for they nearly always bring in their train not only such tutelage but also downright coercion by the Black-Hundred reactionaries. In cases where some improvement of the conditions of the working people seems likely in spite of these circumstances, it is recommended that the deputies should abstain from voting, but should without fail make a statement setting forth the socialist position. Lastly, in those exceptional cases when the group deems it necessary to vote for a particular item, it is recommended that they should not do so without consulting representatives of the Central Committee and, if possible, the Party organizations in the capital cities.

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SECOND VARIANT

On the question of the Budget the Conference considers that on principle it is wrong to vote for the Budget as a whole.

It is also wrong to vote for items of the Budget of the class state which sanction expenditure on instruments for the oppression of the masses (the armed forces, etc.).

In voting for reforms or for items of expenditure for cultural purposes, point of departure should be the principle of our programme that Social-Democrats reject reforms involving tutelage of the police and the bureaucracy over the working classes.

Therefore the general rule should be to vote against the so-called reforms and items of expenditure for so-called cultural purposes introduced in the Third Duma.

In special cases where, in spite of the general conditions, some improvement of the conditions of the working people is no more than probable, it is recommended that the deputies should abstain from voting and state their reasons for doing so.

Lastly, in exceptional cases, where there is no doubt that the workers will benefit, it is permissible to vote for a particular item, but it is recommended that the deputies should consult representatives of the Central Committee and Party and trade union bodies.

December 25–26, 1908 (January 7–8, 1909)

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Appendix B

Conference of the Extended Editorial Board of *Proletary*[1]

June 8–17 (21–30), 1909

Speech and Draft Resolution on the Tasks of the Bolsheviks in Relation to Duma Activity

We are coming to the end of the debate, and I don't think there is any need to fix it in a special resolution, because we need to be careful with that. The thing was after all to thrash the matter out among ourselves. In reply to Vlasov[2] on the use of legal opportunities, I will read a draft resolution:

"The Bolshevik Centre resolves: in order *in practice* to achieve—and to achieve in a *revolutionary* Social-Democratic spirit and direction—the objects now recognized by all Bolsheviks of making use of all 'legal opportunities,' all legal and semi-legal organizations of the working class in general and the Duma rostrum in particular, the Bolshevik section must definitely and clearly put before itself the aim of securing at any cost the training up of a body of experienced Bolsheviks, specialized in their job and firmly established in their particular *legal* post (trade unions; clubs; Duma committees, etc., etc.)."

Vlasov stated that this refers to the leaders. This is not the case. The trouble is that in our Bolshevik section the view prevails that such specialists are not required. Our forces are few: they must be utilized and allotted to the legal functions, and made responsible for carrying out these functions in the name of the section. If we speak of setting up Party cells, we must know how to do it. I have drafted a resolution on agitation by leaflets:

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"Having discussed the question of the Bolsheviks' tasks in relation to Duma activity, the Bolshevik Centre resolves to draw the attention of all local organisations to the importance of agitation by leaflets (in addition to the local and regional press) which spread among the masses information about the Duma work of the Social-Democrats and give direction to this work. Subjects for such leaflets might be indications of questions to be highlighted from the Duma rostrum, the summing up of the Social-Democrats' activity in the Duma and the grouping of the different parties, outlines of propagandist speeches on these questions, analysis of the political significance of particularly important Social-Democratic speeches in the Duma, pointing out omissions or inaccuracies in Social-Democratic Duma speeches, and extracts from these speeches giving practical conclusions important for propaganda and agitation, etc., etc."

And I have also roughed-out in the form of a resolution the points on the question of our attitude to Duma activity which were discussed at the private meeting:[3]

"II. The difference between the revolutionary Social-Democratic use of the Duma and the reformist (or more broadly, opportunist) use can be described by the following indications, which do not pretend to be complete.

"From the standpoint of the external relations, so to speak, of the Duma Social-Democratic group, the difference between the revolutionary Social-Democratic use of the Duma and opportunist use consists in the following: the necessity to combat the tendency on the part of deputies and very often of the bourgeois intellectuals surrounding them—a tendency natural in all bourgeois society (and in Russia during a period of reaction especially)—to make parliamentary activity the basic, most important thing of all, an end in itself. In particular it is essential to make every effort that the group should carry on its work as one of the functions subordinated to the interests of the working-class movement as a whole, and also that the group should be in constant contact with the Party, not drawing apart from it but implementing Party views, the directives of Party congresses and the central institutions of the Party.

"From the standpoint of the internal content of the group's activity, it is essential to bear the following in mind. The aim of the activity of the parliamentary Social-Democratic group differs in principle from that of *all* other political parties. The aim of the proletarian party is not to do deals or haggle with the powers that be, not to engage in the hopeless patching-up of the regime of the feudalist-bourgeois dictatorship of counter-revolution, but to develop in every way the class-consciousness, the socialist clarity of thought, the revolutionary determination and

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all-round organization of the mass of the workers. Every step in the activity of the Duma group must serve this fundamental aim. Therefore more attention must be paid to promoting the aims of socialist revolution from the Duma rostrum. Efforts must be made to ensure that speeches should more often be heard from the Duma rostrum propagandizing the fundamental conceptions and aims of socialism, namely, of scientific socialism. Then, in the conditions of continuing bourgeois-democratic revolution, it is extremely important that the Duma group should systematically combat the torrent of counter-revolutionary attacks on the 'liberation movement,' and the prevalent tendency (both on the part of the outright reactionaries and of the liberals, especially the Cadets) to condemn the revolution and discredit it, its aims, its methods, etc. The Social-Democratic group in the Duma must bear high the banner of the revolution, the banner of the advanced class, leader of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia.

"Furthermore it is essential to point out a task of the Duma Social-Democratic group, which is exceptionally important at the present time, namely, that of participating energetically in all discussions of labor legislation. The group must utilize the rich parliamentary experience of the West-European Social-Democrats, taking special care to avoid the opportunist distortion of this aspect of its activity. The group must not whittle down its slogans and the demands of our Party's minimum program, but draft and introduce its Social-Democratic Bills (and also amendments to Bills of the government and the other parties), in order to unmask to the masses the hypocrisy and falseness of social-reformism, in order to draw the masses into independent economic and political mass struggle, which alone can bring real gains to the workers or transform half-hearted and hypocritical 'reforms' under the existing system into strong-points for an advancing working-class movement towards the complete emancipation of the proletariat.

"The Duma Social-Democratic group and the whole Social-Democratic Party should take the same stand towards reformism within Social-Democracy, which is the latest product of opportunist vacillation.

"Finally, revolutionary Social-Democratic use of the Duma should differ from opportunist use in that the Social-Democratic group and the Party are bound to explain to the masses in every possible way the class character of all bourgeois political parties, not confining themselves to attacks on the government and outright reactionaries, but exposing both the counter-revolutionary nature of liberalism and the waverings of petty-bourgeois peasant democracy."

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Appendix C

Explanatory Note on the Draft of the Main Grounds of the Bill on the Eight-Hour Working Day[1]

II[2]

In the present, second part of the explanatory note we intend to dwell on the question of the *type* of the Social-Democratic Bill on the Eight-Hour Working Day for the Third Duma and on the *grounds* explaining the *basic features* of the Bill.

The original draft in the possession of the Duma Social-Democratic group and given to our subcommittee could be taken as a basis, but it has required a number of alterations.

The main aim of the Bills introduced by the Social-Democrats in the Third Duma must lie in *propaganda and agitation* for the Social-Democratic program and tactics. Any hopes of the "reformism" of the Third Duma would not only be ludicrous, but would threaten completely to distort the character of Social-Democratic revolutionary tactics and convert it into the tactics of opportunist, liberal social-reformism. Needless to say, such a distortion of Social-Democratic Duma tactics would directly and emphatically contradict the universally binding decisions of our Party, viz.: the resolutions of the London Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. and the resolutions, confirmed by the Central Committee, of the All-Russian Party Conferences of November 1907 and December 1908.

For Bills introduced by the Social-Democratic group in the Duma to fulfil their purpose, the following conditions are necessary.

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(1) Bills must set out in the clearest and most definite form the individual demands of the Social-Democrats included in the minimum program of our Party or necessarily following from this program;

(2) Bills must never be burdened with an abundance of legal subtleties; they must give the *main grounds* for the proposed laws, but not elaborately worded texts of laws with all details;

(3) Bills should not excessively isolate various spheres of social reform and democratic changes, as might appear essential from a narrowly legal, administrative or "purely parliamentary" standpoint. On the contrary, pursuing the aim of Social-Democratic propaganda and agitation, Bills should give the working class the most definite idea possible of the *necessary connection* between factory (and social in general) reforms and the *democratic* political changes without which all "reforms" of the Stolypin autocracy are inevitably destined to undergo a "Zubatovist"[3] distortion and be reduced to a dead letter. As a matter of course this indication of the connection between economic reforms and politics must be achieved not by including in all Bills the demands of consistent democracy in their entirety, but by bringing to the fore the democratic and specially proletarian-democratic institutions corresponding to each individual reform, and the impossibility of realising such institutions without radical political changes must be emphasised in the explanatory note to the Bill;

(4) in view of the extreme difficulty under present conditions of legal Social-Democratic propaganda and agitation among the masses, Bills must be so composed that the Bill taken separately and the explanatory note to it taken separately *can achieve their aim* on reaching the masses (whether by being reprinted in non-Social-Democratic newspapers, or by the distribution of separate leaflets with the text of the Bill, etc.), i.e., can be read by rank-and-file unenlightened workers to the advantage of the development of their class-consciousness. With this end in view the Bills in their *entire* structure must be imbued with a spirit of proletarian distrust of the employers and of the state as an organ serving the employers: in other words, the spirit of the class struggle must permeate the whole structure of the Bill and ensue from the sum of its separate propositions;

finally (5) under conditions in Russia today, i.e., in the absence of a Social-Democratic press and Social-Democratic meetings, Bills must give a sufficiently *concrete* idea of the changes demanded by the Social-Democrats and not limit themselves to a mere *proclamation* of principle. The ordinary unenlightened worker should find his interest aroused by the Social-Democratic Bill, he should be inspired by its concrete picture of change so that later he passes from this individual picture to the Social-Democratic world outlook as a whole.

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Proceeding from these basic premises, it has to be admitted that the type of Bill chosen by the author of the original draft of the Bill on the Eight-Hour Working Day is *more in accordance* with Russian conditions than, for example, those Bills on a shorter working day which were introduced by the French and German Social-Democrats in their parliaments. For example, the Bill on the Eight-Hour Working Day moved by Jules Guesde in the French Chamber of Deputies on May 22, 1894, contains two articles: the first forbids working longer than eight hours per day and six days per week, the second permits work in several shifts provided that the number of working hours per week does not exceed 48.[4] The German Social-Democratic Bill of 1890 contains 14 lines, proposing a 10-hour working day immediately, a nine-hour working day from January 1, 1894, and an eight-hour day from January 1, 1898. In the session of 1900–02 the German Social-Democrats put forward a still shorter proposal for limiting the working day immediately to ten hours, and subsequently to eight hours, at a time to be decided separately.[5]

In any case, of course, such Bills are ten times more rational from the Social-Democratic point of view than attempts to "adapt" oneself to what is *practicable* for reactionary or bourgeois governments. But whereas in France and Germany, where there is freedom of press and assembly, it suffices to draft a Bill with only a *proclamation of principle*, in our case in Russia at the present time it is necessary to add *concrete propaganda* material in the Bill *itself*.

Hence we regard as more expedient the *type* adopted by the author of the original draft, but a number of corrections need to be made in this draft, for in some cases the author commits what is in our opinion an extremely important and extremely dangerous mistake, viz., he lowers the demands of our minimum program without any need for it (e.g., by fixing the weekly rest period at 36 hours instead of 42, or by saying nothing about the need to have the consent of the workers' organizations for permitting night work). In a few cases the author, as it were, tries to adapt his Bill to the requirement of "practicability" by proposing, for example, that the *minister* should decide requests for exceptions (with the matter being raised in the legislative body) and by making no mention of the role of the workers' trade union organizations in implementing the law on the eight-hour day.

The Bill proposed by our subcommittee introduces into the original draft a number of corrections in the above-mentioned direction. In particular, we shall dwell on the grounds for the following alterations of the original draft.

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On the question of what enterprises should come under the Bill, the sphere of its application should be extended to include all branches of industry, trade and transport, and all kinds of institutions (including those of the state: the post office, etc.) as well as home work. In the explanatory note put forward in the Duma the Social-Democrats must especially emphasize the need for such an extension and for putting an end to all boundaries and divisions (in this matter) between the factory, trading, office, transport and other sections of the proletariat.

The question may arise of agriculture, in view of the demand in our minimum program for an eight-hour working day "for all wage-workers." We think, however, that it is hardly expedient at *the present time* for the Russian Social-Democrats to take the initiative in proposing an eight-hour working day in agriculture. It would be better to make the proviso in the explanatory note that the Party reserves the right to introduce a further Bill in regard to both agriculture and domestic service, etc.

Further, in all cases where the Bill deals with the permissibility of exceptions to the law, we have inserted a demand for the consent of the workers' trade union to each exception. This is essential in order to show the workers clearly that it is impossible to achieve an actual reduction of the working day without independent action on the part of the workers' organizations.

Next, we must deal with the question of the *gradual* introduction of the eight-hour working day. The author of the original draft does not say a word about this, limiting himself to the simple demand for the eight-hour day as in Jules Guesde's Bill. Our draft, on the other hand, follows the model of Parvus[6] and the draft of the German Social-Democratic group in the Reichstag, establishing a *gradual* introduction of the eight-hour working day (immediately, i.e., within three months of the law coming into force, a ten-hour day, and a reduction by one hour annually). Of course, the difference between the two drafts is not such an essential one. But in view of the very great technical backwardness of Russian industry, the extremely weak organization of the Russian proletariat and the huge mass of the working class population (handicraftsmen, etc.) that has not yet participated in any big campaign for a reduction of the working day—in view of all these conditions it will be more expedient *here and now*, in the Bill *itself*, to answer the inevitable objection that a sharp change is impossible, that with such a change the workers' wages will be reduced, etc.[7] Laying down a gradual introduction of the eight-hour working day (the Germans protracted its introduction to eight years; Parvus to four years; we are proposing two years) provides an immediate reply to this objection: work in excess of ten hours per day is certainly irrational

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economically and impermissible on health and cultural grounds. The annual term, however, for reducing the working day by one hour fully suffices for the technically backward enterprises to come into line and introduce changes, and for the workers to go over to the new system without an appreciable difference in labor productivity.

The introduction of the eight-hour working day should be made gradual not in order to "adapt" the Bill to the measure of the capitalists or government (there can be no question of this, and if such ideas were to arise we should, of course, prefer to exclude any mention of gradualness), but in order to show everyone quite clearly the technical, cultural and economic practicability of the Social-Democratic program in even one of the most backward countries.

A serious objection to making the introduction of the eight-hour working day a gradual one in the *Russian* Social-Democratic Bill would be that this would disavow, even if indirectly, the revolutionary Soviets of Workers' Deputies of 1905, which called for *immediate* realization of the eight-hour working day. We regard this as a serious objection, for the slightest disavowal of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies *in this respect* would be direct renegacy, or at any rate support of the renegades and counter-revolutionary liberals, who have made themselves notorious by such a disavowal.

We think therefore that *in any case*, whether gradualness will be incorporated in the Bill of the Social-Democratic Duma group or not, *in any case* it is altogether essential that *both* the explanatory note submitted to the Duma *and* the Duma speech of the Social-Democratic representative, should quite definitely express a view which absolutely excludes the slightest disavowal of the actions of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies and absolutely *includes* our recognition of them as correct in principle, wholly legitimate and necessary.

"The Social-Democrats," so, approximately, the statement of the Social-Democratic representatives or their explanatory note should read, "do not in any case renounce the *immediate* introduction of the eight-hour working day; on the contrary, in *certain* historical conditions, when the struggle becomes acute, when the energy and initiative of the mass movement are at a high level, when the clash between the old society and the new assumes sharp forms, when for the success of the working class struggle against medievalism, for instance, it is *essential* not to stop at anything—in short, in conditions resembling those of November 1905—the Social-Democrats regard the *immediate* introduction of the eight-hour working day as not only legitimate but even *essential*. By inserting in its Bill at the present time a gradual introduction of the eight-hour working

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day, the Social-Democrats merely desire to show thereby the entire possibility of putting into effect the demands of the programme of the R.S.D.L.P. even under the worst historical conditions, even during the slowest tempo of economic, social and cultural development."

Let us repeat: we consider *such* a declaration on the part of the Social-Democrats in the Duma and in their explanatory note to the Bill on the eight-hour working day as *absolutely* and under all circumstances essential, whereas the question of introducing a gradual establishment of the eight-hour working day in the Bill itself is relatively less important.

The remaining changes made by us in the original draft of the Bill concern particular details and do not require special comment.

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Appendix D

The Sixth (Prague) All-Russia Conference of the RSDLP[1]

January 5–17 (18–30), 1912

Elections to the Fourth Duma

I

This Conference recognizes the undoubted necessity for participation by the R.S.D.L. Party in the forthcoming election campaign to the Fourth State Duma, the nomination of independent candidates of our Party and the formation in the Fourth Duma of a Social-Democratic group, which as a section of the Party is subordinated to the Party as a whole.

The main tasks of our Party in the elections, and equally of the future Social-Democratic group in the Duma itself—a task to which all else must be subordinated—is socialist, class propaganda and the organization of the working class.

The main election slogans of our Party in the forthcoming elections must be:

(1) *A democratic republic*.
(2) *The eight-hour working day*.
(3) *Confiscation of all landed estates*.

In all our election agitation it is essential to give the clearest possible explanation of these demands, based on the experience of the Third

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Duma and all the activities of the government in the sphere of central as well as local administration.

All propaganda on the remaining demands of the Social-Democratic minimum programme, namely: universal franchise, freedom of association, election of judges and officials by the people, state insurance for workers, replacement of the standing army by the arming of the people, and so on, must be inseparably linked with the above-mentioned three demands.

II

The general tactical line of the R.S.D.L.P. in the elections should be the following: the Party must conduct a merciless struggle against the tsarist monarchy and the parties of landowners and capitalists supporting it, at the same time steadfastly exposing the counter-revolutionary views of the bourgeois liberals (headed by the Cadet Party) and their sham democracy.

Particular attention in the election campaign must be paid to dissociating the position of the proletarian party from that of *all* non-proletarian parties and explaining the petty-bourgeois essence of the sham socialism of the democratic (chiefly Trudovik, Narodnik and Socialist-Revolutionary) groups, as well as the harm done to democracy by their waverings on the question of consistent and mass revolutionary struggle.

As far as electoral agreements are concerned, the Party, adhering to the decisions of the London Congress, must:

(1) Put forward its candidates in all worker curias and forbid *any* agreement *whatsoever* with other parties or groups (liquidators);

(2) In view of the great agitational significance of the mere fact of nomination of independent Social-Democratic candidates, it is necessary to ensure that in the second assemblies of urban voters, and as far as possible in the peasant curias, the Party puts forward its own candidates;

(3) In cases of a second ballot (Article 106 of the Election Regulations) in the election of electors at the second assemblies of urban voters it is permissible to conclude agreements with bourgeois democrats against the liberals, and then with the liberals against all the government parties. One form of agreement can be the compilation of a general list of electors for one or several towns in proportion to the number of votes registered at the first elections;

(4) In those five cities (St. Petersburg, Moscow, Riga, Odessa, Kiev) where there are direct elections with a second ballot, it is essential in the first elections to put forward independent Social-Democratic candidates for the second urban curia voters. In the event of a second ballot here,

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and since there is obviously no danger from the Black Hundreds, it is permissible to come to an agreement only with the democratic groups against the liberals;

(5) There can be no electoral agreements providing for a common platform, and Social-Democratic candidates must not be bound by any kind of political commitment, nor must Social-Democrats be prevented from resolutely criticising the counter-revolutionary nature of the liberals and the half-heartedness and inconsistency of the bourgeois democrats;

(6) At the second stage of the elections (in the uyezd assemblies of delegates, in the gubernia assemblies of voters, etc.), wherever it proves essential to ensure the defeat of an Octobrist-Black Hundred or a government list in general, an agreement must be concluded to share the seats, primarily with bourgeois democrats (Trudoviks, Popular Socialists, etc.), and then with the liberals (Cadets), independents, Progressists, etc.

III

All Social-Democrats must *immediately* commence preparation for the election campaign, and should pay special attention to the following:

(1) It is urgently necessary everywhere to form illegal Social-Democratic nuclei in order that they may without delay prepare for the Social-Democratic election campaign;

(2) To pay the necessary attention to the strengthening and broadening of the legally existing workers' press;

(3) The entire election campaign must be carried out in close alliance with workers' trades unions and all other associations of workers, and the form in which these societies participate must be chosen with due consideration paid to their legal status;

(4) Special attention must be paid to the organizational and agitation preparation of the elections in the worker curias of those six gubernias in which the election of deputies to the Duma from the worker curias is guaranteed (St. Petersburg, Moscow, Vladimir, Kostroma, Kharkov and Ekaterinoslav). Every single worker elector—here and in the other gubernias—must be a Social-Democratic Party member;

(5) Assemblies of workers' delegates, guided by the decision of the illegal Party organizations, must decide *who precisely* is to be elected to the Duma from the workers, and bind all electors, under threat of boycott and being branded as traitors, to withdraw their candidature in favor of the Party candidate;

(6) In view of persecution by the government, the arrest of Social-Democrat candidates, etc., it is necessary to carry out particularly

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restrained, systematic and careful work, using every means to react quickly to all police tactics and nullify all the tricks and coercion of the tsarist government, and to elect Social-Democrats to the Fourth State Duma, and then in general to strengthen the group of democratic deputies in the Duma;

(7) The candidates of the Social-Democratic Party are endorsed, and instructions concerning the elections are given by the local illegal organizations and groups of the Party, under the general supervision and guidance of the Central Committee of the Party;

(8) If, despite all efforts, it proves impossible to convene a Party congress or a new conference before the elections to the Fourth Duma, the Conference empowers the Central Committee, or an institution appointed for the purpose by the latter, to issue concrete instructions on questions concerning the conduct of the election campaign in the various localities, or to meet special circumstances arising, etc.

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Appendix E

The Election Platform of the RSDLP[1]

Worker comrades, and all citizens of Russia!

The elections to the Fourth Duma are to be held in the very near future. Various political parties and the government itself are already energetically preparing for the elections. The Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, the party of the class-conscious proletariat, that by its glorious struggle in 1905 dealt the first serious blow to tsarism and forced it to concede representative institutions, calls on each and every one of you who enjoy electoral rights, as well as the great majority deprived of rights, to play a most energetic part in the elections. All those who strive for the liberation of the working class from wage slavery, all those who hold the cause of Russia's freedom dear, must start work at once so that at the elections to the Fourth Duma, the landowners' Duma, they may unite and strengthen the fighters for freedom, and advance the class-consciousness and organization of Russian democrats.

It is five years since the government coup of June 3, 1907, when Nicholas the Bloody, the Khodynka Tsar,[2] "the victor and destroyer" of the First and Second Dumas, threw aside his pledges, promises, and manifestos, so that, together with the Black-Hundred landowners and the Octobrist merchants, he could take vengeance on the working class and all the revolutionary elements in Russia, in other words, on the vast majority of the people, for 1905.

Vengeance for the revolution is the hallmark of the entire period of the Third Duma. Never before has Russia known such raging persecution on the part of tsarism. The gallows erected during these five years beat all records of three centuries of Russian history. The places of exile, penal establishments and prisons overflow with political prisoners in unheard-of numbers, and never before has there been such torture and torment of the vanquished as under Nicholas II. Never before has there been such a wave of embezzlement, such tyranny and violence on the part of officials, who are forgiven everything because of their zeal in

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the struggle against "sedition"; never before have the ordinary people, and the peasants in particular, been so humiliated by any representative of authority. Never before has there been such avid, ferocious, reckless persecution of the Jews, and after them of other peoples, not belonging to the dominant nation.

Anti-Semitism and the most crude nationalism became the only political platform of the government parties, and Purishkevich became the one complete, undiluted, and perfect personification of all the methods of rule by the present tsarist monarchy.

And, what have these frenzied acts of the counter-revolutionaries led to?

The consciousness that it is impossible to continue living in this way is penetrating into the minds of even the "higher," exploiting, classes of society. The Octobrists themselves, the dominant party in the Third Duma, the party of landowners and merchants, terrified of the revolution and cringing before authority, are more and more expressing the conviction in their own press that the tsar and the nobility, which they have served so faithfully and truly, have led Russia into an impasse.

There was a time when the tsarist monarchy was the gendarme of Europe, protecting reaction in Russia and assisting in forcibly suppressing all movements for freedom in Europe. Nicholas II has brought things to such a pass, that he is now not only a European, but an Asiatic gendarme who, with the help of intrigues, money and the most brutal violence, tries to suppress all movements for freedom in Turkey, Persia, and China.

But no tsarist atrocities can halt Russia's progress. No matter how these feudal survivals, the Purishkeviches, Romanovs and Markovs, disfigure and cripple Russia, she is still advancing. With each step of Russia's development the demand for political freedom is becoming ever more insistent. In the twentieth century Russia cannot live without political freedom any more than any other country can. Is it possible to expect political reforms from the tsarist monarchy, when the tsar himself dissolved the first two Dumas and rode roughshod over his own Manifesto of October 17, 1905? Is it possible to conceive of political reforms in modern Russia, when the gang of officials mocks at all laws, knowing that in doing so, they have the protection of the tsar and his associates? Do we not see how, taking advantage of the tsar's protection, or that of his relatives, Illiodor yesterday, Rasputin today, Tolmachov yesterday, Khvostov today, Stolypin yesterday, Makarov today, trample under foot all and every law? Do we not see that even the tiny, ludicrously pathetic "reforms" of the landowners' Duma, reforms directed towards refurbishing and strengthening tsarist rule, are repudiated and distorted by the Council of State or the personal decrees of Nicholas the Bloody? Do we

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not know that the Black-Hundred gang of murderers who shoot at the backs of the deputies whom the rulers want out of the way, who sent to penal servitude the Social-Democratic deputies to the Second Duma, who are always organising pogroms, who insolently rob the treasury on all sides—do we not know that that gang enjoys the special blessings of the tsar and receives his poorly-disguised aid, direction and guidance? Look at the fate, under Nicholas Romanov, of the main political demands of the Russian people for the sake of which the best representatives of the people have been waging a heroic struggle for more than three-quarters of a century, for the sake of which millions rose up in 1905. Is universal, equal and direct suffrage compatible with the Romanov monarchy, when even the non-universal, unequal and indirect suffrage of the elections to the First and Second Dumas was trampled underfoot by tsarism? Is freedom of unions, associations, strikes, compatible with the tsarist monarchy, when even the reactionary, ugly law of March 4, 1906[3] has been brought to nought by the governors and the ministers? Do not the words of the Manifesto of October 17, 1905 about the "immutable principle of freedom of citizens," about the "real inviolability of the individual," about "freedom of conscience, speech, assembly, and unions," sound like mockery? Every subject of the tsar witnesses this mockery daily.

Enough of liberal lies! As if a union between freedom and the old rule were possible, as if political reforms were conceivable under a tsarist monarchy. The Russian people have paid for their childish illusions with the hard lessons of the counter-revolution. Anyone seriously and sincerely desiring political freedom, will raise the banner of a *republic* proudly and bravely, and *all* the live forces of Russian democracy will certainly be drawn to that banner by the politics of the tsarist-landowner gang.

Time was, and not so long ago, when the slogan "Down with the autocracy" seemed too advanced for Russia. Nevertheless, the R.S.D.L. Party issued this slogan, the advanced workers caught it up and spread it throughout the country; and in two or three years this slogan became a popular saying. To work then, worker comrades and all citizens of Russia, all those who do not want to see our country sink finally into stagnation, barbarity, lack of rights and the appalling poverty of tens of millions. The Russian Social-Democrats, the Russian workers will succeed in making "Down with the tsarist monarchy, long live the Russian Democratic Republic!" a nation-wide slogan.

Workers, remember 1905. Millions of toilers then were given new life, raised to class-consciousness, to freedom, through the strike movement. Tens of years of tsarist reforms did not and could not give you a tenth part of those improvements in your lives which you then achieved by mass

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struggle. The fate of the Bill on workers' insurance, made unrecognizable by the landowners' Duma with the aid of the Cadets, has once again shown what you can expect "from above."

The counter-revolution has taken away almost all our gains, but it has not taken and cannot take away the strength, courage and belief in their cause of the young workers, nor of the all-Russian proletariat that is growing and becoming stronger.

Long live the new struggle to improve the lot of workers who do not wish to remain slaves doomed to toil in workshops and factories! *Long live the 8-hour working day*! He who desires freedom in Russia must help the class which dug a grave for the tsarist monarchy in 1905, and which will throw the mortal enemy of all the peoples of Russia into that grave during the forthcoming Russian revolution.

Peasants! You sent your deputies, the Trudoviks, to the First and Second Dumas, believing in the tsar, hoping by peaceful means to win his agreement to the transfer of landed estates to the people. You have now been able to convince yourselves that the tsar, the biggest landowner in Russia, will stop at nothing in defense of the landowners and officials; at neither perjury nor lawlessness, oppression or bloodshed. Are you going to tolerate the yoke of the former serf-Owners, silently bear the affronts and insults of the officials, and die in hundreds of thousands, nay millions, from the agonies of starvation, from disease caused by hunger and extreme poverty, or will you die in the fight against the tsarist monarchy and tsarist-landowner Duma, in order to win for our children a more or less decent life, fit for a human being.

This is the question which the Russian peasants will have to decide. The working-class Social-Democratic Party calls on the peasants to struggle for complete freedom, for the transfer of all land from the landowners to the peasantry, without any compensation whatsoever. Sops thrown to the peasants cannot remedy their poverty or relieve their hunger. The peasants are not asking for charity, but for the land which has been drenched in their blood and sweat for centuries. The peasants do not need the tutelage of the authorities and the tsar, but freedom from officials and the tsar, freedom to arrange their own affairs.

Let the elections to the Fourth Duma sharpen the political consciousness of the masses and draw them again into decisive battles. Three main parties are contesting at the elections: (1) the Black Hundreds, (2) the liberals, and (3) the Social-Democrats.

The Rights, Nationalists, and Octobrists belong to the Black Hundreds. They all support the government; this means that any differences which may exist between them are of no serious significance whatsoever.

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Merciless struggle against all these Black-Hundred parties—this must be our slogan!

The liberals are the Cadet Party (the "Constitutional Democrats" or "people's freedom" party). This is the party of the liberal bourgeoisie, which seeks to share power with the tsar and the feudal landowners in such a way, that their power is not basically destroyed, and does not pass to the people. While the liberals detest the government which prevents them from taking power, while they help to expose it, and introduce vacillation and disintegration into its ranks, their hatred of the revolution and fear of mass struggles is even greater than their hatred of the government, and their attitude towards the popular liberation movement is even more wavering and irresolute, so that in decisive moments they treacherously go over to the side of the monarchy. During the counter-revolution, the liberals, echoing the "Slavonic dreams" of tsarism, posing as a "responsible opposition," grovelling before the tsar as "His Majesty's Opposition," and pouring dirt on the revolutionaries and the revolutionary struggle of the masses, have turned away more and more from the struggle for freedom.

The Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party was able to raise the revolutionary banner even in the reactionary Third Duma, it has succeeded even there in helping the organization and revolutionary enlightenment of the masses, and the peasants' struggle against the landowners. The party of the proletariat is the only party of the advanced class, the class capable of winning freedom for Russia. Today, our Party goes into the Duma, not in order to play at "reforms," not in order to "defend the Constitution," "convince" the Octobrists or "to dislodge reaction" from the Duma, as the liberals who are deceiving the people say they will, but in order to call the masses to the struggle from the Duma rostrum, to explain the teachings of socialism, to expose every government and liberal deception, to expose the monarchist prejudices of the backward sections of the people, and the class roots of the bourgeois parties,—in other words in order to prepare an army of class-conscious fighters for a new Russian revolution.

The tsarist government and the Black-Hundred landowners have recognized to the full the tremendous revolutionary force represented by the Social-Democratic group in the Duma. Hence, all the efforts of the police and Ministry of the Interior are directed towards preventing the social democrats from entering the Fourth Duma. Unite then, workers and citizens! Rally around the R.S.D.L.P. which at its recent conference, recovering from the breakdown during the evil years, again gathered its forces and raised aloft its banner. Let each and every one take part in the elections and the election campaign, and the efforts of the government will be defeated, the red banner of revolutionary Social-Democracy will

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be hoisted from the rostrum of the Duma in police-ridden, oppressed, blood-drenched, down-trodden and starving Russia!

Long live the Russian Democratic Republic!

Long live the 8-hour day!

Long live the confiscation of all landed estates!

Workers and citizens! Support the election campaign of the R.S.D.L.P.! Elect the candidates of the R.S.D.L.P.!

Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party

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Appendix F

The National Equality Bill[1]

Comrades:

The Russian Social-Democratic Labor group in the Duma has decided to introduce in the Fourth Duma a Bill to abolish the disabilities of the Jews and other non-Russians. The text of this Bill you will find below.

The Bill aims at abolishing all national restrictions against all nations: Jews, Poles, and so forth. But it deals in particular detail with the restrictions against the Jews. The reason is obvious: no nationality in Russia is so oppressed and persecuted as the Jewish. Anti-Semitism is striking ever deeper root among the propertied classes. The Jewish workers are suffering under a double yoke, both as workers and as Jews. During the past few years, the persecution of the Jews has assumed incredible dimensions. It is sufficient to recall the anti-Jewish pogroms and the Beilis case.

In view of these circumstances, organized Marxists must devote proper attention to the Jewish question.

It goes without saying that the Jewish question can effectively be solved only together with the fundamental issues confronting Russia today. Obviously, we do not look to the nationalist-Purishkevich Fourth Duma to abolish the restrictions against the Jews and other non-Russians. But it is the duty of the working class to make its voice heard. And the voice of the *Russian* workers must be particularly loud in protest against national oppression.

In publishing the text of our Bill, we hope that the Jewish workers, the Polish workers, and the workers of the other oppressed nationalities will express their opinion of it and propose amendments, should they deem it necessary.

At the same time we hope that the Russian workers will give particularly strong support to our Bill by their declarations, etc.

In conformity with Article 4 we shall append to the Bill a special list of regulations and laws to be rescinded. This appendix will cover about a hundred such laws affecting the Jews alone.

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A BILL FOR THE ABOLITION OF ALL DISABILITIES OF THE JEWS AND OF ALL RESTRICTIONS ON THE GROUNDS OF ORIGIN OR NATIONALITY

1. Citizens of all nationalities inhabiting Russia are equal before the law.
2. No citizen of Russia, regardless of sex and religion, may be restricted in political or in any other rights on the grounds of origin or nationality.
3. All and any laws, provisional regulations, riders to laws, and so forth, which impose restrictions upon Jews in any sphere of social and political life, are herewith abolished. Article 767, Vol. IX, which states that "Jews are subject to the general laws in all cases *where no special regulations affecting them, have been issued*" is herewith repealed. All and any restrictions of the rights of Jews as regards residence and travel, the right to education, the right to state and public employment, electoral rights, military service, the right to purchase and rent real estate in towns, villages. etc., are herewith abolished, and all restrictions of the rights of Jews to engage in the liberal professions, etc., are herewith abolished.
4. To the present law is appended a list of the laws, orders, provisional regulations, etc., that limit the tights of the Jews, and which are subject to repeal.

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Appendix G

The Petrograd City Conference of the RSDLP (Bolsheviks)[1]

April 14–22 (April 27–May 5), 1917

Resolution on the Municipal Question

Under no circumstances can the municipal platform, particularly at the present revolutionary time, be reduced only to communal questions.

It must also contain a definite answer to all present-day key issues, especially those concerning the war and the tasks of the proletariat in regard to the central power.

Even in municipal questions, such as that of the militia, food supply, housing, and taxes, we cannot expect the petty-bourgeois parties to agree to revolutionary measures necessary to combat war and its consequences.

For all these reasons we must go to the elections without blocs, upon a straight issue of principles announced in the programme of the proletarian party, and explain to the people the fundamental differences between the three main party divisions, namely,(1) the Cadets and those to the right of them; (2) the parties of the petty bourgeoisie (Narodniks) and a section of workers who have fallen under the influence of the bourgeoisie (the Menshevik defencists); (3) the party of the revolutionary proletariat (the Bolsheviks).

The technical arrangements for the elections based on the system of proportional representation make blocs technically unnecessary.

It is advisable in every way to encourage closer relations and mutual exchange of opinions, on the basis of practical work, with those Mensheviks who are really breaking with revolutionary defencism and with support of the Provisional Government. With such comrades it is permissible

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to run a joint ticket, on condition that there be sufficient agreement on fundamentals. A concrete municipal programme should be worked out, particularly on the question of a proletarian militia to be paid for by the capitalists.

Pravda No. 46, May 15 (2), 1917

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Appendix H

Excerpt from "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat"[1]

The comparison of the Constituent Assembly elections in November 1917 with the development of the proletarian revolution in Russia from October 1917 to December 1919 enables us to draw conclusions concerning bourgeois parliamentarism and the proletarian revolution in every capitalist country. Let me try briefly to formulate, or at least to outline, the principal conclusions.

1. Universal suffrage is an index of the level reached by the various classes in their understanding of their problems. It shows how the various classes are *inclined* to solve their problems. The actual *solution* of those problems is not provided by voting, but by the class struggle in all its forms including civil war.

2. The socialists and Social-Democrats of the Second International take the stand of vulgar petty-bourgeois democrats and share the prejudice that the fundamental problems of the class struggle can be solved by voting.

3. The party of the revolutionary proletariat must take part in bourgeois parliaments in order to enlighten the masses; this can be done during elections and in the struggle between parties in parliament. But limiting the class struggle to the parliamentary struggle, or regarding the latter as the highest and decisive form, to which all the other forms of struggle are subordinate, is actually desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

4. All the representatives and supporters of the Second International, and all the leaders of the German, so-called "independent,"

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Social-Democratic Party, actually go over to the bourgeoisie in this way when they recognize the dictatorship of the proletariat in words, but in deeds, by their propaganda, imbue the proletariat with the idea that it must first obtain a formal expression of the will of the majority of the population under capitalism (i.e., a majority of votes in the bourgeois parliament) to transfer political power to the proletariat, which transfer is to take place later.

All the cries, based on this premise, of the German "independent" Social-Democrats and similar leaders of decayed socialism against the "dictatorship of a minority," and so forth, merely indicate that those leaders fail to understand the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, which actually reigns even in the most democratic republics, and that they fail to understand the conditions for its destruction by the class struggle of the proletariat.

5. This failure to understand consists, in particular, in the following: they forget that, to a very large degree, the bourgeois parties are able to rule because they deceive the masses of the people, because of the yoke of capital, and to this is added self-deception concerning the nature of capitalism, a self-deception which is characteristic mostly of the petty-bourgeois parties, which usually want to substitute more or less disguised forms of class conciliation for the class struggle.

"First let the majority of the population, while private property still exists, i.e., while the rule and yoke of capital still exist, express themselves in favor of the party of the proletariat and only then can and should the party take power"—so say the petty-bourgeois democrats who call themselves socialists but who are in reality the servitors of the bourgeoisie.

"Let the revolutionary proletariat first overthrow the bourgeoisie, break the yoke of capital, and smash the bourgeois state apparatus, then the victorious proletariat will be able rapidly to gain the sympathy and support of the majority of the non-proletarian working people by satisfying their needs at the expense of the exploiters"—say we. The opposite will be rare exception in history (and even in such an exception the bourgeoisie can resort to civil war, as the example of Finland showed).

6. Or in other words:

"First we shall pledge ourselves to recognize the principle of equality, or consistent democracy, while preserving private property and the yoke of capital (i.e., actual inequality under formal equality), and try to obtain the decision of the majority on this basis"—say the bourgeoisie and their yes-men, the petty-bourgeois democrats who call themselves socialists and Social-Democrats.

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"First the proletarian class struggle, winning state power, will destroy the pillars and foundations of actual inequality, and then the proletariat, which has defeated the exploiters, will lead all working people to the *abolition of classes*, i.e., to socialist *equality*, the only kind that is not a deception"—say we.

7. In all capitalist countries, besides the proletariat, or that part of the proletariat which is conscious of its revolutionary aims and is capable of fighting to achieve them, there are numerous politically immature proletarian, semi-proletarian, semi-petty-bourgeois strata which follow the bourgeoisie and bourgeois democracy (including the "socialists" of the Second International) because they have been deceived, have no confidence in their own strength, or in the strength of the proletariat, are unaware of the possibility of having their urgent needs satisfied by means of the expropriation of the exploiters.

These strata of the working and exploited people provide the vanguard of the proletariat with allies and give it a stable majority of the population; but the proletariat can win these allies only with the aid of an instrument like state power, that is to say, only after it has overthrown the bourgeoisie and has destroyed the bourgeois state apparatus.

8. The strength of the proletariat in any capitalist country is far greater than the proportion it represents of the total population. That is because the proletariat economically dominates the center and nerve of the entire economic system of capitalism, and also because the proletariat expresses economically and politically the real interests of the overwhelming majority of the working people under capitalism.

Therefore, the proletariat, even when it constitutes a minority of the population (or when the class-conscious and really revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat constitutes a minority of the population), is capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and, after that, of winning to its side numerous allies from a mass of semi-proletarians and petty bourgeoisie who never declare in advance in favor of the rule of the proletariat, who do not understand the conditions and aims of that rule, and only by their subsequent experience become convinced that the proletarian dictatorship is inevitable, proper and legitimate.

9. Finally, in every capitalist country there are always very broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie which inevitably vacillate between capital and labor. To achieve victory, the proletariat must, first, choose the right moment for its decisive assault on the bourgeoisie, taking into account, among other things, the disunity between the bourgeoisie and its petty-bourgeois allies, or the instability of their alliance, and so forth. Secondly, the proletariat must, after its victory, utilize this vacillation of the petty

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bourgeoisie in such a way as to neutralize them, prevent their siding with the exploiters; it must be able to hold on for some time *in spite of this vacillation*, and so on, and so forth.

10. One of the necessary conditions for preparing the proletariat for its victory is a long, stubborn and ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism, and similar bourgeois influences and trends, which are inevitable, since the proletariat is operating in a capitalist environment. If there is no such struggle, if opportunism in the working-class movement is not utterly defeated beforehand, there can be no dictatorship of the proletariat. Bolshevism would not have defeated the bourgeoisie in 1917–19 if before that, in 1903–17, it had not learned to defeat the Mensheviks, i.e., the opportunists, reformists, social-chauvinists, and ruthlessly expel them from the party of the proletarian vanguard.

At the present time, the verbal recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat by the leaders of the German "Independents," or by the French Longuetists, and the like, who are *actually* continuing the old, habitual policy of big and small concessions to and conciliation with opportunism, subservience to the prejudices of bourgeois democracy ("consistent democracy" or "pure democracy" as they call it) and bourgeois parliamentarism, and so forth, is the most dangerous self-deception—and sometimes sheer fooling of the workers.

December 16, 1919

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Appendix I

Second Congress of the Communist International, 1920

Theses on the Communist Parties and Parliamentarism[1]

1. The New Epoch and the New Parliamentarism.

The attitude of the socialist parties towards parliamentarism was in the beginning, in the period of the First International, that of using bourgeois parliaments for the purpose of agitation. Participation in parliament was considered from the point of view of the development of class consciousness, i.e. of awakening the class hostility of the proletariat to the ruling class. This relationship was transformed, not through the influence of theory, but through the influence of political development. Through the uninterrupted increase of the productive forces and the extension of the area of capitalist exploitation, capitalism, and with it the parliamentary state, gained continually increasing stability.

Hence there arose: The adaptation of the parliamentary tactics of the socialist parties to the "organic" legislative work of the bourgeois parliament and the ever greater importance of the struggle for reforms in the framework of capitalism, the domination of the so-called minimum program of social democracy, the transformation of the maximum program into a debating formula for an exceedingly distant "final goal." On this basis then developed the phenomena of parliamentary careerism, of corruption and of the open or concealed betrayal of the most elementary interests of the working class.

The attitude of the Communist International towards parliamentarism is determined, not by a new doctrine, but by the change in the role of

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parliament itself. In the previous epoch parliament performed to a certain degree a historically progressive task as a tool of developing capitalism. Under the present conditions of unbridled imperialism, however, parliament has been transformed into a tool for lies, deception, violence and enervating chatter. In the face of imperialist devastation, plundering, rape, banditry and destruction, parliamentary reforms, robbed of any system, permanence and method, lose any practical significance for the toiling masses.

Like the whole of bourgeois society, parliamentarism too is losing its stability. The sudden transition from the organic epoch to the critical creates the basis for a new tactic of the proletariat in the field of parliamentarism. Thus the Russian Labour Party (the Bolsheviks) had already worked out the nature of revolutionary parliamentarism in the previous period because since 1905 Russia had been shaken from its political and social equilibrium and had entered the period of storms and shocks.

To the extent that some socialists, who tend towards communism, point out that the moment for the revolution has not yet come in their countries, and refuse to split from parliamentary opportunists, they proceed, in the essence of the matter, from the conscious assessment of the coming epoch as an epoch of the relative stability of imperialist society, and assume that on this basis a coalition with the Turatis and the Longuets can bring practical results in the struggle for reforms. Theoretically clear communism, on the other hand, will correctly estimate the character of the present epoch: highest stage of capitalism; imperialist self-negation and self-destruction; uninterrupted growth of civil war, etc. The forms of political relations and groupings can be different in different countries. The essence however remains everywhere one and the same; what is at stake for us is the immediate political and technical preparations for the insurrection of the proletariat, the destruction of bourgeois power and the establishment of the new proletarian power.

At present, parliament, for communists, can in no way become the arena for the struggle for reforms, for the amelioration of the position of the working class, as was the case at certain times in the previous period. The center of gravity of political life has at present been removed finally and completely beyond the bounds of parliament.

On the other hand the bourgeoisie is forced, not only by reason of its relations to the toiling masses, but also by reason of the complex mutual relations within the bourgeois class, to carry out part of its measures one way or another in parliament, where the various cliques haggle for power, reveal their strong sides, betray their weak sides, expose themselves, etc.

Therefore it is the historical task of the working class to wrest this apparatus from the hands of the ruling class, to smash it, to destroy it,

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and replace it with new proletarian organs of power. At the same time, however, the revolutionary general staff of the class has a strong interest in having its scouts in the parliamentary institutions of the bourgeoisie in order to make this task of destruction easier. Thus is demonstrated quite clearly the basic difference between the tactic of the communist, who enters parliament with revolutionary aims, and the tactics of the socialist parliamentarian. The latter proceeds from the assumption of the relative stability and the indeterminate duration of the existing rule. He makes it his task to achieve reform by every means, and he is interested in seeing to it that every achievement is suitably assessed by the masses as a merit of parliamentary socialism. (Turati, Longuet and Co.).

In the place of the old adaptation to parliamentarism the new parliamentarism emerges as a tool for the annihilation of parliamentarism in general. The disgusting traditions of the old parliamentary tactics have, however, repelled a few revolutionary elements into the camp of the opponents of parliamentarism on principle (IWW) and of the revolutionary syndicalists (KAPD). The Second Congress therefore adopts the following Theses.

2. Communism, the Struggle for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and the Utilization of Bourgeois Parliaments

I

1. Parliamentarism as a state system has become a "democratic" form *of* the rule *of* the bourgeoisie, which at a certain stage *of* development requires the fiction *of* popular representation which outwardly appears to be an organization *of* a "popular will" that stands outside the classes, but in essence is a machine for oppression and subjugation in the hands *of* ruling capital.

2. Parliament is a definite form *of state* order; therefore it cannot at all be the form *of* communist society, which knows neither classes nor class struggle nor any state power.

3. Nor can parliamentarism be a form of proletarian state administration in the period of transition from the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie to the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the moment of sharpened class struggle, in the civil war, the proletariat must inevitably build up its state organization as *a fighting organization*, into which the representatives of the previous ruling classes are not permitted. In this stage any fiction of the "popular will" is directly harmful to the working class. The proletariat

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does not need any parliamentary sharing of power, it is harmful to it. The form of the proletarian dictatorship is the soviet republic.

4. The bourgeois parliaments, one of the most important apparatuses of the bourgeois state machine, cannot as such in the long run be taken over, just as the proletariat cannot at all take over the proletarian state. The task of the proletariat consists in breaking up the bourgeois state machine, destroying it, and with it the parliamentary institutions, be they republican or a constitutional monarchy.

5. It is no different with the local government institutions of the bourgeoisie, which it is theoretically incorrect to counterpose to the state organs. In reality they are similar apparatuses of the state machine of the bourgeoisie, which must be destroyed by the revolutionary proletariat and replaced by local soviets of workers' deputies.

6. Consequently communism denies parliamentarism as a form of the society of the future. It denies it as a form of the class dictatorship of the proletariat. It denies the possibility of taking over parliament in the long run; it sets itself the aim of destroying parliamentarism. Therefore there can only be a question of utilizing the bourgeois state institutions for the purpose of their destruction. The question can be posed in this, and only in this, way.

II

7. Every class struggle is a political struggle, for in the final analysis it is a struggle for power. Any strike at all that spreads over the whole country becomes a threat to the bourgeois state and thus takes on a political character. Every attempt to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to destroy its state means carrying out a political fight. Creating a proletarian state apparatus for administration and for the oppression of the resisting bourgeoisie, of whatever type that apparatus will be, means conquering political power.

8. Consequently the question of political power is not at all identical with the question of the attitude towards parliamentarism. The former is a general question of the proletarian class struggle, which is characterized by the intensification of small and partial struggles to the general struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist order as a whole.

9. The most important method of struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, i.e. against its state power, is above all mass action. Mass actions are organized and led by the revolutionary mass organizations (trades unions, parties, soviets) of the proletariat under the general leadership of a unified, disciplined, centralized Communist Party. Civil war

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is war. In this war the proletariat must have its bold officer corps and its strong general staff, who direct all operations in all theatres of the struggle.

10. The mass struggle is a whole system of developing actions sharpening in their form and logically leading to the insurrection against the capitalist state. In this mass struggle, which develops into civil war, the leading party of the proletariat must as a rule consolidate all its legal positions by making them into auxiliary bases of its revolutionary activity and subordinating these positions to the plan of the main campaign, the campaign of the mass struggle.

11. The rostrum of the bourgeois parliament is such an auxiliary base. The argument that parliament is a bourgeois state institution cannot at all be used against participation in the parliamentary struggle. The Communist Party does not enter these institutions in order to carry out organic work there, but in order to help the masses from inside parliament to break up the state machine and parliament itself through action (for example the activity of Liebknecht in Germany, of the Bolsheviks in the Tsarist Duma, in the "Democratic Conference," in Kerensky's "Pre-Parliament," in the "Constituent Assembly" and in the town Dumas, and finally the activity of the Bulgarian Communists).

12. This activity in parliament, which consists mainly in revolutionary agitation from the parliamentary rostrum, in unmasking opponents, in the ideological unification of the masses who still, particularly in backward areas, are captivated by democratic ideas, look towards the parliamentary rostrum, etc., should be totally and completely subordinated to the aims and tasks of the mass struggle outside parliament.

Participation in election campaigns and revolutionary propaganda from the parliamentary rostrum is of particular importance for winning over those layers of the workers who previously, like, say, the rural toiling masses, stood far away from political life.

13. Should the communists have the majority in local government institutions, they should a) carry out revolutionary opposition to the bourgeois central power; b) do everything to be of service to the poorer population (economic measures, introduction or attempted introduction of an armed workers' militia, etc.); c) at every opportunity show the limitations placed on really big changes by the bourgeois state power; d) on this basis develop the sharpest revolutionary propaganda without fearing the conflict with the power of the state; e) under certain circumstances replace the local administration by local workers' councils. The whole activity of the Communists in the local administration must therefore be part of the general work of disrupting the capitalist system.

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14. Election campaigns should not be carried out in the spirit of the hunt for the maximum number of parliamentary seats, but in the spirit of the revolutionary mobilization of the masses for the slogans of the proletarian revolution. Election campaigns should be carried out by the whole mass of the Party members and not only by an elite of the Party. It is necessary to utilize all mass actions (strikes, demonstrations, ferment among the soldiers and sailors, etc.) that are taking place at the time, and to come into close touch with them. It is necessary to draw all the proletarian mass organizations into active work.

15. In observing all these conditions, as well as those in a special instruction, parliamentary activity is the direct opposite of that petty politicking done by the social democratic parties of every country, who go into parliament in order to support this "democratic" institution or at best to "take it over." The Communist Party can only be exclusively in favour of the revolutionary utilization of parliament in the spirit of Karl Liebknecht and of the Bolsheviks.

III

16. "Anti-parliamentarism" on principle, in the sense of absolute and categorical rejection of participation in elections and revolutionary parliamentary activity, is therefore a naive, childish doctrine below any criticism, a doctrine which occasionally has a basis in healthy nausea at politicking parliamentarians, but which does not see at the same time the possibility of a revolutionary parliamentarism. Moreover, this doctrine is often linked with a completely incorrect conception of the role of the party, which sees in the Communist Party not the centralized shock troops of the workers, but a decentralized system of loosely allied groups.

17. On the other hand an absolute recognition of the necessity of actual elections and of actual participation in parliamentary sessions *under all circumstances* by no means flows from the recognition in principle of parliamentary activity. That is dependent upon a whole series of specific conditions. Withdrawal from parliament can be necessary given a specific combination of these conditions. This is what the Bolsheviks did when they withdrew from the Pre-parliament in order to break it up, to rob it of any strength and boldly to counterpose to it the St. Petersburg Soviet on the eve of the insurrection. They did the same in the Constituent Assembly on the day of its dissolution, raising the Third Congress of Soviets to the high point of political events. According to circumstances, a boycott of the elections and the immediate violent removal of not only the whole bourgeois state apparatus but also the bourgeois parliamentary

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clique, or on the other hand participation in the elections while parliament itself is boycotted, etc., can be necessary.

18. In this way the Communist Party, which recognizes the necessity of participating in the elections not only to the central parliament, but also to the organs of local self-government and work in these institutions as a general role, must resolve this problem concretely, starting from the specific peculiarities of any given moment. A boycott of elections or of parliament and withdrawal from the latter is mainly permissible when the preconditions for the immediate transition to the armed struggle and the seizure of power are already present.

19. In the process, one should always bear in mind the relative unimportance of this question. Since the center of gravity lies in the struggle for state power carried out outside parliament, it goes without saying that the question of the proletarian dictatorship and the mass struggle for it cannot be placed on the same level as the particular question of the utilization of parliament.

20. The Communist International therefore emphasizes decisively that it holds every split or attempted split within the Communist Parties in this direction and only for this reason to be a serious error. The Congress calls on all elements who base themselves on the recognition of the mass struggle for the proletarian dictatorship under the leadership of the centralized party of the revolutionary proletariat exerting its influence on all the mass organizations of the workers, to strive for the complete unity of the communist elements despite possible differences of opinion over the question of the utilization of bourgeois parliaments.

3. Revolutionary Parliamentarism

In order to secure the actual carrying out of revolutionary parliamentary tactics it is necessary that:

1. The Communist Party as a whole and its Central Committee, already in the preparatory stage, that is to say before the parliamentary election, must take care of the high quality of the personal composition of the parliamentary faction. The Central Committee of the Communist Party must be responsible for the whole work of the parliamentary faction. The Central Committee of the Communist Party must have the undeniable right to raise objections to any candidate whatever of any organization whatever, if there is no guarantee that if he gets into parliament, he will pursue really communist policies.

The Communist Party must break the old social democratic habit of putting up exclusively so-called "experienced" parliamentarians, predominantly lawyers and similar people, as members of parliament. As a rule it

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is necessary to put up workers as candidates, without baulking at the fact that these are mainly simple party members without any great parliamentary experience. The Communist Party must ruthlessly stigmatize those careerist elements that come around the Communist Parties in order to get into parliament. The Central Committees of the Communist Parties must only ratify the candidatures of those comrades who have shown their unconditional devotion to the working class by long years of work.

2. When the elections are over, the organization of the parliamentary faction must be completely in the hands of the Central Committee of the Communist Parties, irrespective of whether the whole Party is legal or illegal at the time in question. The chairman and the committee of the communist parliamentary faction must be ratified by the Central Committee of the Party. The Central Committee of the Party must have a permanent representative in the parliamentary faction with a right of veto, and on all important political questions the parliamentary faction shall ask the Central Committee of the Party in advance for instructions concerning its behavior. Before any big forthcoming action by the communists in parliament the—Central Committee has the right and the duty to appoint or to reject the speaker for the faction, and to demand of him that he previously submit the main points of his speech or the speech itself for approval by the Central Committee. A written undertaking must be officially obtained from every candidate on the proposed communist list that, as soon as he is called upon to do so by the Party, he is prepared to resign his seat, so that in a given situation the action of withdrawing from parliament can be carried out in a united way.

3. In those countries where reformist, semi-reformist or merely careerist elements have managed to penetrate into the communist parliamentary faction (as has already happened in some countries) the Central Committees of the Communist Parties have the obligation of carrying out a thorough purge of the personal composition of the faction proceeding on the principle that it is much more useful for the cause of the working class to have a small, but truly communist faction, than a large faction without consistent communist policies.

4. On the decision of the Central Committee, the communist member of parliament has the obligation to combine legal with illegal work. In those countries where the communist members of parliament enjoy immunity from bourgeois law, this immunity must be utilized to support the Party in its illegal work of organization and propaganda.

5. Communist members of parliament must subordinate all parliamentary action to the activity of their Party outside parliament. The regular introduction of demonstrative draft laws, which are not intended to be accepted by the bourgeois majority, but for the purposes of propaganda,

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agitation and organization, must take place on the instructions of the Party and its Central Committee.

6. In the event of demonstrations by workers in the streets and other revolutionary actions, the communist members of parliament have the duty to place themselves in the most conspicuous leading place at the head of the masses of workers.

7. Communist members of parliament must use every means at their disposal (under the supervision of the Party) to create written and any other kind of links with the revolutionary workers, peasants and other toilers. Under no circumstances can they act like social democratic members of parliament, who pursue business connections with their voters. They must be constantly at the disposal of the Party for any propaganda work in the country.

8. Every communist member of parliament must bear in mind that he is not a legislator seeking an understanding with other legislators, but a Party agitator who has been sent into the enemy camp in order to carry out Party decisions there. The communist member of parliament is responsible, not to the scattered mass of voters, but to his Party, be it legal or illegal.

9. Communist members of parliament must speak a language that can be understood by every simple worker, every peasant, every washerwoman and every shepherd, so that the Party is able to publish the speeches as leaflets and distribute them to the most distant corners of the country.

10. Simple communist workers must appear in the bourgeois parliament without leaving precedence to so-called experienced parliamentarians—even in cases where the workers are only newcomers to the parliamentary arena. If need be the members of parliament from the ranks of the working class can read their speeches from notes, so that the speeches can be printed in the press and as leaflets.

11. Communist members of parliament must use the parliamentary rostrum for the unmasking not only of the bourgeoisie and its hacks, but also of the social-patriots, and the reformists, of the vacillations of the politicians of the "center" and of other opponents of communism, and for broad propaganda for the ideas of the Communist International.

12. Even in cases where there are only a few of them in the whole parliament, communist members of parliament have to show a challenging attitude towards capitalism in their whole behavior. They must never forget that only he is worthy of the name of a communist who is an arch enemy of bourgeois society and its social democratic hacks not only in words but also in deeds.

August 2, 1920

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A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature

This book, consciously and intentionally, privileges Lenin's voice, and hopefully the reader who has read it appreciates that decision. For that reason I thought it best not to encumber the text, including the footnotes (for the most part), with other voices. Now is the time to bring the Leninologists into the conversation given how extensive and influential their literature and voice is. But in no way does this interrogation of what they have to say pretend to be exhaustive. The focus here is solely on those who speak to Lenin's electoral and parliamentary strategy and differ in one way or another with what I present. Admittedly, attention is given mainly to those with most visibility, and I recognize that I may have missed voices that didn't get the attention they deserve. What I do here could easily become a stand-alone article or even maybe a book—but not at this time. If it ends up being no more than an outline, sketch, or even an inspiration for either, then it has served its purpose. The organization of this review follows the order of the subject matter of the book and prioritizes the literature alluded to in the footnotes in reference to the text.

One body of literature neglected here, only for lack of language skills—which I readily acknowledge—is the Russian scholarship. What I can say is that I'm aware of its existence because it figures sometimes into the English-language scholarship, which is often about correcting the heavy hand of Stalinist orthodoxy.[1] Thus in responding to the English-language literature, I indirectly address at least some of the Russian-language scholarship.

Chapter 1: "Legal and Illegal Work": The Third Duma

If the Leninological literature is prone to ignore Lenin's contributions to the Marxist tradition of participating in the electoral process, there is one related issue that has never escaped their otherwise myopic eyes. The departure of Bogdanov has always given Lenin-bashers an opportunity to find what they are always in search of—"Lenin the ogre," by way of innuendo or being tendentious. After a somewhat convoluted

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description of what the editorial board of *Proletary* decided, Robert Service declares that "Bogdanov was to be driven out of the Bolshevik faction"[2]—in other words, a fait accompli before the actual vote. And if Orlando Figes is to be believed, it was because "Lenin always liked a fight," such as in "the campaign for the boycott of the Duma" (actually, it was against the boycott) and in "the campaign against Bogdanov."[3] The actual record of the meeting, as I've summarized, challenges such distortions. Krupskaya's distillation is enlightening: "[T]he enlarged meeting of the editorial board of *Proletarii* passed a resolution condemning the organization of this new fraction. Bogdanov declared that he would not submit to the decision of the meeting and was expelled from the fraction."[4] Though it's not clear if he included Bogdanov, Lenin later wrote in 1920 that "among" those expelled "were many splendid revolutionaries who subsequently were (and still are) commendable members of the Communist Party."[5]

Lenin's positive assessment of the work of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) fraction in the Third Duma at the end of this chapter would appear to be incompatible with Robert McKean's claim that "Lenin's most cherished goal was to break the unity of the Social Democratic parliamentary group, which in the Third State Duma had remained impervious to his efforts at control."[6] Of all Lenin's latter-day academic opponents, McKean is the only one to take seriously his electoral/parliamentary work, though very selectively and tendentiously. His overriding thesis is that none of the exile revolutionary leaders, including Lenin and the Bolsheviks, exercised any real influence on developments inside Russia, specifically St. Petersburg, from the counterrevolution in 1907 to the February Revolution in 1917. The actual target of his very detailed account, upon close reading, is official Soviet scholarship. Lenin, in his own words, never hid the fact, unlike his hagiographers in Moscow, that he was often at loggerheads with the internals—what McKean admits occasionally. The details provided in Chapter 1 confirm that fact as far as the Third Duma fraction is concerned. The main problem with McKean is that despite his rich excavation of the data, on everything else he is prone—as is the case here about Lenin's "most cherished goal"—to simply make such assertions without the supporting evidence. More important is that he either disagrees with Lenin's politics (which is the likely case) or doesn't understand them. That becomes clearer when examining his assertions about Lenin and the RSDLP fraction in the Fourth Duma.

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Chapter 2: "To Prepare for a New Russian Revolution": The Fourth Duma

Except for Lenin's opposition to the boycott of the Duma elections, Robert Service virtually ignores his electoral/parliamentary strategy. That changes with the Fourth Duma elections, the only time Service addresses any of his substantive writings on the topic. In this instance he disputes Lenin's analysis of the outcome that resulted in a significant drop in the number of liberals elected, particularly the Octobrists: "The newly ultra-right political complexion of the parliamentary chamber, according to Lenin, was the product of the calculations and manipulations of the authorities." Service disagrees: "A more cogent explanation is that opinion among most members of the property-owning classes, especially the gentry in the countryside, had spontaneously moved rightward . . . The Russian empire . . . was not a regime of total control."[7] But Lenin wasn't alone in charging "manipulation" of the elections by the regime: "This has been," Lenin wrote, "commented on quite sufficiently by the *entire* liberal and democratic press, and the Cadets' detailed interpellation in the Fourth Duma speaks of the same thing."[8] Subsequent scholarship sustains Lenin's point. About the biggest loser, the Octobrists, Geoffrey Hosking writes, "The indifference and disorganization of their followers combined with active administrative pressure by the government against their well-known left-wingers to ensure this. In some of the provinces, governors and police chiefs closed down Octobrist electoral meetings and disqualified their candidates." And there was another factor that Lenin also called attention to and commented on: "The Holy Synod mobilized the clergy in support of the Rights and Nationalists and warned against voting for the Octobrists."[9]

The real purpose of Service's bogus correction—which requires him to sound like an apologist for the regime—is that it pretends to yield a brilliant insight: "Lenin's conspiracy theory of the Fourth Duma elections divulged much about his own instincts about elections and majorities."[10] Aha, finally, the pre-1917 smoking gun. Lenin, in other words, was projecting his own supposed cynicism about elections onto the regime. This conveniently informs Service's introduction to the Prague Conference, where Lenin, he asserts, resorted to "manipulations [that] were blatantly factional" in order to pull off a "charade. His objective, we're told, was the confection of a 'Party Conference' which would be not merely a predominantly Bolshevik assembly but an assembly consisting mainly of Bolsheviks who supported Lenin's strategy . . . Democratic procedures were disregarded." Yet Service is forced to admit, since the record is all so transparent, that despite these largely unsubstantiated charges "this did

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not mean that it was a Conference made in Lenin's image."[11] And at the end of the gathering, the "seven elected members of the Central Committee . . . were not as solidly pro-Lenin as is usually thought."[12] This charge about Lenin's "instincts about elections and majorities" and the innuendos implied is probably de rigueur for the Leninological industry and one that requires a revisit.

McKean makes similar charges about the Prague meeting: "The transparency of the Bolshevik leader's motives—his desire to equate the Bolshevik faction with the party—the blatantly manipulative character of the 'election' of the two delegates from the capital, and the dubious legality of the entire proceedings deepened divisions within Social Democracy."[13] And like Service, he asserts more than he proves. In both cases, the security and logistical challenges that Russian revolutionaries faced in trying to hold a delegated meeting in exile—from the organizing of meetings in Russia where delegates could be elected to their travel abroad and back—are short shrifted or ignored.

What Service and McKean are incapable or unwilling to understand is what Trotsky later explained was wrong with trying to reconcile with the Liquidationists and the Conciliationists like himself and why Lenin, as history proved, was right. The Service and McKean crowd never address the political question that was at the heart of the debate, as did Trotsky some decades later:

> Certain critics of Bolshevism to this day regard my old conciliationism as the voice of wisdom. Yet its profound erroneousness had been long ago demonstrated both in theory and practice. A simple conciliation of factions is possible only along some sort of "middle" line. But where is the guaranty that this artificially drawn diagonal line will coincide with the needs of objective development? The task of scientific politics is to deduce a program and a tactic from an analysis of the struggle of classes, not from the [ever-shifting] parallelogram of such secondary and transitory forces as political factions. True, the position of the reaction was such that it cramped the political activity of the entire Party within extremely narrow limits. At the same time, it might have seemed that the differences of opinion were unimportant and artificially inflated by the émigré leaders. Yet it was precisely during the period of reaction that the revolutionary party was unable to train its cadres without a major perspective. The preparation of tomorrow was a most important element in the policy of today. The policy of conciliation thrived on the hope that the course of events itself would prompt the necessary tactic. But that fatalistic optimism meant in practice not only repudiation of factional struggle but the very idea of a party, because, if "the course of events" it capable of directly dictating to the masses the correct policy, what is the use of any special unification of

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> the proletarian vanguard, the working out of a program, the choice of leaders, the training in a spirit of discipline?[14]

No one has more credibility than Trotsky on this question, who functioned in real time as Lenin's most capable opponent—unlike those carping from the comfortable side lines of hindsight and what they find so inconvenient about his verdict.

Because McKean's sympathies are with the seven Menshivik-liquidators in the RSDLP fraction, he rejects the reasons the Bolsheviks gave for the split in the fall of 1913: "On the flimsiest of pretexts, formulated by Lenin, which were mostly demonstrably false, the six Bolsheviks broke away in the last week of October 1913 to form an independent Russian Social Democratic Workers' Fraction."[15] In the accompanying footnote, he writes, "The pretexts included the unfounded charges that the Menshevik seven deprived the Bolshevik six of opportunities to address the House and of their due share of seats on parliamentary commissions."[16] He cites the Bolshevik press for these charges but, once again, provides no proof for his claim that they were "unfounded." As the reader can see in Chapter 2, the charges are quite specific, and if McKean knows better he is obligated to provide details for his claim that they were "demonstrably false."

Regarding the "fly in the ointment," Roman Malinovsky, there has been much speculation about why it took Lenin so long to be convinced of his duplicity when so many others, including Bolsheviks, had doubts. Even after Malinovsky mysteriously abandoned the fraction, Lenin maintained civil and comradely relations with him until unimpeachable damning evidence surfaced in 1917. R. C. Elwood's *Roman Malinovsky: A Life without a Cause* (1977) remains the best source in English on the actual details. Lenin-bashers like Service use such facts to accuse the "party boss" of "naïveté," of allowing himself to not only be "flattered" but be "fooled" by the provocateur.[17] Louis Fischer, in a kinder, gentler form of Lenin-bashing, speculates that Malinovsky was able to convince Lenin that in spite of how things might look Malinovsky had actually been won to the cause—"so persuaded" was Lenin "of the all-conquering force of revolution."[18]

At an inquiry of the Provisional Government in June 1917 about the Malinovsky affair, Lenin offered in his deposition an explanation for his reluctance to rush to judgment: "After Malinovsky's resignation, we appointed a commission to investigate the suspicions . . . We interrogated quite a few witnesses, arranged personal confrontations with Malinovsky, wrote up hundreds of pages of transcripts of these testimonies . . . Definitely, not one member of the commission was able to find any proof . . . the general

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conviction of all three members of the commission was that Malinovsky was not a provocateur, and we stated so in the press."[19] Years later Trotsky came to Lenin's defense despite the harm Malinovsky had done: "[I]n those days suspicions, complicated at times by factional hostility, poisoned the atmosphere of the underground. No one presented any direct evidence against Malinovsky. After all, it was impossible to condemn a member of the Party to political—and perhaps even physical—death on the basis of vague suspicion . . . Lenin deemed it his duty to defend Malinovsky with the energy which always distinguished him."[20]

At the risk of overkill, let me offer an additional explanation that complements, I think, what Lenin and Trotsky said about the affair. Malinovsky, I suspect, was Lenin's "Eccarius problem." By this, I'm referring to the initially comradely, then awkward and eventually severed relationship that Marx had with Johan Georg Eccarius—one that revealed Marx's capacity for patience, for almost three decades. Eccarius was unique in the Marx circle because he was an actual worker, a tailor, and Marx did all he could—at times overlooking and apologizing for his shortcomings—to promote him, specifically, as a "worker-intellectual." Hal Draper, who provides the essential details, explains why: "The importance to Marx of such a proletarian cadre . . . could eliminate or reduce the need for bourgeois intellectuals in the movement. Eccarius, like Wilhelm Wolff [to whom Marx dedicated *Capital*], was prized because his successes showed that proletarian elements could eventually do the jobs that tended to be monopolized by the 'eddicated' bourgeois whose corruptive role Marx and Engels so often denounced."[21]

What Lenin found so attractive about Malinovsky in their initial encounter at the Prague conference was that he was an industrial worker and a leader of the most revolutionary of the unions in St. Petersburg, the metal workers—a most valuable acquisition for the Bolsheviks. In his deposition to the investigating commission, Lenin said Malinovsky was known in RSDLP circles as "the Russian Bebel" (it's no coincidence that Engels spent innumerable hours in forging August Bebel into a "worker-intellectual"). And like Marx and Engels, Lenin had long "denounced" the "corruptive role" of petit-bourgeois intellectuals for the workers' movement. In his first letter to Malinovsky after the resignation, who was then in a German prison of war camp, Lenin was solicitous about his intellectual needs: "Can anything be sent to you, and what do you need? Do you read Russian newspapers and books?" A couple of months later, Lenin wrote, "We [Krupskaya and I] were very glad to hear that you have a library there and the opportunity to study and give lectures."[22] Like Marx, Lenin, I suspect, bent over backward to give Malinovsky the

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benefit of the doubt in the absence of concrete evidence exactly because he was a worker who had the potential for being a "worker-intellectual." That combination of facts, I think, explains what has been a conundrum only for Lenin's enemies.

Chapter 3: The "Great War," 1917, and Beyond

The issue about whether the five Duma fraction members agreed with Lenin's theses on the war, particularly the one that called for "revolutionary defeatism," has been the subject of much discussion. Though Badayev admitted that "certain formal amendments were suggested" to them at the meeting—brought prematurely to an end by the police invasion—he wrote that "no objections were raised to the principles outlined." McKean disagrees on the basis of credible evidence that many Bolsheviks, leaders and rank and file inside Russia, opposed Lenin's stance. He may be right, but he provides—as he is wont to do—no concrete evidence about the fraction members to support his claim. The best that he can mount is the fact that in his trial statement Petrovsky didn't explicitly embrace Lenin's theses. But that raises the question of why Lenin praised what he said while denouncing Kamenev, who explicitly did distance himself from the theses.[23] And then there is Figes, who also has an aversion for evidence when it's inconvenient for his agenda: "The Bolsheviks were the only socialist party to remain broadly united in their opposition to the war, although they too had their own defensists during the early days before Lenin had imposed his views."[24] He doesn't explain to the reader how Lenin could manage such a feat, since he didn't attend the meeting where the fraction adopted his stance. He clearly could not have relied on Kamenev doing it for him.

McKean's real aim, in keeping with the thesis of his book about the disconnect between the émigrés and the internal movements, is to go after Lenin for his "extremist stance," which put him, "once again," at "loggerheads" with the Bolsheviks inside Russia. His reformist-minded brain, however, is incapable of understanding that a communist like Lenin was obligated to begin not with "the dangers and difficulties of propagating the concept of their country's defeat at a time of heightened patriotic feelings" but rather with the objective needs of the proletariat internationally.[25] When the Guns of August exploded, the most important task was to prevent the working class from becoming cannon fodder for their bourgeois governments. An extreme situation required an extreme policy. Nothing was more convincing to other working classes in the other belligerent countries of the sincere commitment of one's own working class to an antiwar policy and proletarian internationalism than

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the hope for the defeat of the government of one's own bourgeoisie. Lenin argued that to carry out such a line within Russia, "though undoubtedly difficult, is the only task worthy of a proletarian, the only socialist task." And the Russian proletariat had a special obligation to take the lead: "It is the proletariat in the most backward of the belligerent Great Powers which, through the medium of their party, have had to adopt—especially in view of the shameful treachery of the German and French Social-Democrats—revolutionary tactics that are quite unfeasible unless they 'contribute to the defeat' of their own government, but which alone lead to a European revolution, to the permanent peace of socialism, to the liberation of humanity from the horrors, misery, savagery and brutality now prevailing."[26] Because of his animus toward Lenin, little in McKean's otherwise very rich account helps the reader to understand why the Bolsheviks successfully led the proletariat to power in 1917 and were able to defend that power.

Probably no moment in the Russian Revolution has attracted as much attention from its foes as the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in January 1918. In the tradition of Kautsky, Service attempts to skew Lenin as the chief culprit. About Lenin's election to it in November, he fumes,

> Seldom has a parliament acquired a member so disdainful of his achievement in being elected. Only in the pre-October months of 1917 had he ever spoken warmly about the Constituent Assembly; and even then it was mainly with the purpose of undermining public confidence in the Provisional Government's will to convoke the Assembly. He had no abiding fondness for institutions elected by universal suffrage. His manipulativeness and lack of public candor was so extreme that, while the Second Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was in session, he implored his Bolshevik Central Committee colleagues to announce a postponement of the Constituent Assembly elections . . . [H]is central colleagues overruled his proposed tergiversation on 26 October, arguing that it would damage the party politically.[27]

The key charge is that Lenin never really wanted a Constituent Assembly, owing to his long-in-place lack of "fondness for institutions elected by universal suffrage." Careful readers of this book will now understand why there's a deafening silence in Service's narrative about Lenin's electoral/parliamentary strategy prior to the October Revolution. His claim, in fact, sounds other-worldly. In many ways this book is a detailed refutation of Service's fantasies.

Beginning with Chapter 2 of *LES1905*, the reader can verify that Lenin by at least 1899 advocated that social democrats should call for

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a "Zemsky Sobor of representatives of the people for the elaboration of a constitution"—what had been a demand of Russian social democrats since 1885. In his Draft Program of 1902, he added what had not been in Plekhanov's document: "For its part, the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party is firmly convinced that the complete, consistent, and lasting implementation of the indicated political and social changes can be achieved only by overthrowing the autocracy and convoking a Constituent Assembly, freely elected by the whole people."[28] Once the revolutionary movement began in 1905, Lenin made clear that the soviets were a superior form of representative democracy and should be prioritized. But he never abandoned the possibility of a Constituent Assembly, as was clear in his April Theses of 1917, which Service gives only superficial attention to and understandably. The last thesis stated, "I argued that *without* the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies the convocation of the Constituent Assembly is not guaranteed and its success is impossible." Drawing on, as always, the lessons of the Paris Commune, Lenin prioritized, which he never hid from the public, soviet governance as preferable to parliamentary governance. If it was one or the other, the soviets were preferable, because they were much more democratic. And it is exactly that argument about which Service et al. never engage Lenin. It's easier to resort to slander and innuendo. No one who knew Lenin's politics since at least 1899 should have been surprised that he called for pulling the plug on the Constituent Assembly in January 1918. Figes, in his slanderous spin on the Constituent Assembly event, at least acknowledges Lenin's argument: "Lenin had always been contemptuous of the ballot box and had made it clear as early as the April Theses that he viewed Soviet power as a higher form of democracy than the Constituent Assembly."[29] What critics like Figes and Service have always had trouble in explaining is why wasn't there a real constituency in the new Soviet Russia ready to defend with its feet parliamentary democracy via the Constituent Assembly as there was for soviet democracy. The proletarian and peasant masses by then, I argue, saw the latter as their organ of representative democracy and not the former. Lenin knew this to be true exactly because, contra Service and Figes, he took universal suffrage so seriously—the elections to the municipal dumas and the soviets in the months preceding the October Revolution.

Conclusion

As I was concluding the manuscript for this book, I wrote to Alexander Rabinowitch to get his opinion of my claim to have connected the dots between the strategy of Marx and Engels and the Bolshevik triumph in

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1917 via the electoral/parliamentary arenas. He responded immediately on December 20, 2012, as follows: "I appreciated your writing to me with regard to your work on Lenin's electoral strategy in 1917. However, based on my lifetime of painstaking research on the Petrograd Bolsheviks between 1917 and 1919 I regret to say that your hypotheses regarding the importance of elections to Lenin seems completely implausible to me. A rereading of my *The Bolsheviks Come to Power* and *The Bolsheviks in Power* should certainly clarify my reasoning in this regard, as will the book I am now writing on *The Petrograd Bolsheviks in 1919–1920*." For the record, here is the part of my letter to which Rabinowitch responded and another opportunity for readers to reacquaint themselves with the key evidence I mount:

> Lenin's electoral/parliamentary strategy is the project's focus and as far as I can tell it's never been given serious attention, at least in book form. One of my four claims is that it was squarely rooted in the politics of Marx and Engels and another is that his strategy goes a long way in explaining Bolshevik success in October. Only now, after a year of writing, do I feel confident in connecting the dots between both claims and a key piece of evidence was signaled in your *Bolsheviks Come to Power* book. I think—and this is where your opinion would be valuable—this is the first book, certainly, to make the links.
>
> First, a brief overview of the Marx-Engels evidence. In their *Address of March, 1850*—which Lenin, according to Riazanov, committed to memory—Marx and Engels argued that the working class party had to run its own candidates in elections, not with the expectation they would win but an opportunity to "count their forces." The document also raised the possibility of armed struggle. Fast forward to 1884 Engels's *Origins of the Family, Private Property, and State* where he states: "On the day the thermometer of universal suffrage registers boiling point among workers, both they and the capitalists will know where they stand." And then later in 1892 his letter—without the fear of Bismarck's censors—to Paul Lafargue about the value of universal suffrage: "it indicates with the most perfect accuracy the day when a call to armed revolution has to be made." The evidence is quite clear that Lenin knew well the first two texts, if not the third; but his reading of the sub-text in *Origins* is exactly, I argue, what Engels told Lafargue. The bulk of my text is about how Lenin was guided by Marx and Engels's perspective in the work he did around the four state dumas.
>
> In 1917 Lenin gave detailed attention to elections to not only the soviets but the local dumas. My reading of the details you provide on pp. 91–93 is that they bear Lenin's finger prints. The fours state duma experiences, I claim, served him well; he said, as you know, the same in *Left-Wing Communism*—"indispensable," according to him, in the triumph in October. From the July Days onward the "thermometer" metaphor came

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increasingly into play. William Rosenberg's article on the municipal duma elections, which your book pointed me to, is especially valuable. Post-October Bolshevik memoirs, he notes, said the elections were a "means of 'taking the revolutionary temperature of the masses'"—the "thermometer metaphor," I argue, in Engels's *Origins*. Furthermore, there's Lenin's constant usage of the election returns to the soviets and municipal dumas as "objective facts," as he called it, in his efforts to win the rest of the Central Committee to his position about the need to strike in October. And then later, his 1919 article on the Constituent Assembly elections—which seems to be ignored in the standard accounts—offers, I think, convincing evidence that he was right to employ election returns to calculate when to stage the insurrection. He argued that the data would predict the outcome of the civil war and it seems—your opinion would also be useful here—that he was correct.

Is it accurate to say that this is the first study to make at least a credible case, if not a conclusive one, that Marx and Engels's electoral strategy informed Lenin's? And second, if true, was that advice consequential for Bolshevik success in not only taking power but keeping it?

I'm told on good authority that Rabinowitch believes that my claim is "completely implausible" because Lenin "simply didn't trust elections." This suggests that he subscribes to the standard Leninological fare a la Service and Figes: respectively, "He had no abiding fondness for institutions elected by universal suffrage" and "Lenin had always been contemptuous of the ballot box" (since the latter's account is synthetic, I suspect Service is the real author of the calumny). The reader of this book knows by now how utterly false this claim is and why, therefore, there is a deafening silence in both accounts about Lenin's electoral/parliamentary strategy. If Service and Figes's charges are true, why would Lenin—to begin with the earliest evidence—have devoted so much space in his *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* book to a roll-call analysis of voting blocs at the Second Congress of the RSDLP of 1903, the first instance of his penchant for crunching election results? And then afterward, why would he spend innumerable hours poring over, analyzing, and writing about election returns—and recommend that his comrades do the same—for all four State Duma elections, for the municipal dumas of 1917, and then later the Constituent Assembly elections? Why did he take Bolshevik participation in the latter elections so seriously? What about all the election campaign literature he wrote, the resolutions he composed on how the Bolsheviks should conduct themselves in the election arena, his incessant urging of his comrades to take part in elections? Why did he constantly harp on the educational value of elections for the working class? Maybe he was obsessive—as some of his opponents charge—and had nothing

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better to do with his time. More likely, he was dead serious about elections, of every kind.

If the real charge is that Lenin didn't see elections in the bourgeois electoral arena as an end in themselves, then the accusers are correct. As a Marxist, Lenin was thoroughly convinced (correctly, in my view) that fundamental social change has never been achieved through elections. What takes place outside the parliamentary arena, especially in the streets and on the barricades, is decisive in politics—as history has repeatedly shown. To believe otherwise is to be afflicted with "parliamentary cretinism" and what I call "voting fetishism." These were the premises with which he, like his mentors Marx and Engels, addressed the electoral process. Even in the best settings that bourgeois democracy had to offer, elections—owing to their rules, structures, and socioeconomic context—register at best an approximation of working-class opinion; his Swiss exile, again, was most informative. What he said about elections in the United States regarding the role of money in them is as current as ever if not more so. And yet he defended them against apologists for Czarist rule. That was because elections under bourgeois conditions could for the working class be an important means toward an end—a way to "count their forces," as Marx and Engels put it in 1850—and thus they should be taken seriously. The most democratic elections in the public arena that bourgeois society could offer are what the Paris Commune and the revolutions of 1905 and February 1917 ushered in—elections to the Commune and to the soviets. Yes, it's true that Lenin in July–August 1917 began to have doubts about the soviets. But that in no way suggested he gave up on elections as a means; he was prepared to prioritize the local duma elections. What was decisive for Lenin is when the masses went into the streets to defend the soviets—the best of all kinds of elections, voting with one's feet. Certainly, after October 1917 there can be no doubt about his commitment to elections to the soviets. And can there be any question about his commitment to elections for the revolutionary party? Even the most animated Lenin-bashers have never claimed otherwise. Last, there is that most inconvenient document for Lenin skeptics: *Left-Wing Communism*, written in 1920, whose central message was that aspiring Bolsheviks elsewhere needed to emulate what Lenin and his comrades did—that is, take bourgeois elections seriously.

I reread, as Rabinowitch suggested, the relevant sections of his two books. Basically, there is nothing in either that is inconsistent with my argument. In fact, he provides in *The Bolsheviks Come to Power*, as I pointed out to him, useful material to help me make my case, such as the details around the local duma elections at the end of August 1917. But I realize (admittedly in hindsight) that there is a glaring omission in

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his otherwise persuasive explanation for why the Bolsheviks succeeded in 1917. He correctly recognizes Lenin's crucial role in what unfolded. Referring to Lenin's success in winning over—registered by a vote!—the overwhelming number of members of the Bolshevik Central Committee to his view for the need for an armed uprising, Rabinowitch concludes, "Few modern historical episodes better illustrate the sometimes decisive role of an individual in historical events."[30] But is it exactly for that reason it is all so important to know what informed Lenin's steely confidence to be able to win others to his point of view, specifically his calculus for success—what other members of the Central Committee would have been familiar with. Unfortunately, that's missing in Rabinowitch's account. He reproduces, for example, key passages from Lenin's letters to the Central Committee about the urgent need to carry out an armed uprising, which make repeated claims that "the majority is with us now" or some variant, and points to "Bolshevik victories in local elections in Moscow and increases in Bolshevik support among soldiers" or "that the Bolsheviks had majorities in many soviets."[31] But this was precisely Lenin's electoral strategy in action, what more than a decade of training since 1905 had made possible—"to count their forces."

Another example of why it's so important to know Lenin's electoral strategy has to do with his call for a boycott of the Democratic State Conference and Preparliament in the weeks leading up to the armed uprising. Rabinowitch gives due attention to both calls but hardly offers an explanation. Lenin's position was informed by years of debate beginning in 1905 that he was at the center of—knowing when and how to use the tactic of the boycott as part of a revolutionary electoral strategy. That's just what Lenin is referring to in one of the letters Rabinowitch quotes where he denounced Bolsheviks who didn't boycott the Conference: "an erroneous attitude toward parliamentarism in moments of revolutionary (and not constitutional) crisis"—here I suspect most readers of *The Bolsheviks Come to Power* have no idea what he's talking about; I certainly didn't in my initial read many years ago. The logic of Lenin's strategy also explains his stance toward the Constituent Assembly leading up to and after October. I argue that coupled with what this book has unearthed, Rabinowitch's most informative narrative about 1917 would be even more persuasive were he to take into account Lenin's electoral/parliamentary strategy.

Rabinowitch admits in his response to my inquiry that his "lifetime of painstaking research" focuses on "the Petrograd Bolsheviks between 1917 and 1919," for which we're all truly indebted. But to fully understand Lenin's actions in 1917—since the paper trail for much of the year,

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as Rabinowitch points out, is thin owing to his being on the run or in hiding—requires knowing his politics long before then, at least back to 1905. Lenin repeatedly stated that the Revolution of 1905–7 was "the dress rehearsal for 1917," and to not take that seriously requires an explanation. For the last three decades, my research, which this book is the major product of, has been about understanding and detailing Lenin's continuity with Marx and Engels. Rabinowitch, of course, can't necessarily be faulted for not knowing about Lenin's electoral/parliamentary strategy and its roots in Marx and Engels, since until now neither friend nor foe has ever unearthed that rich history (I leave aside the problem of temporal balkanization in much of mainstream historical scholarship).

It's important to recognize that I'm not proposing an original explanation of Lenin's calculus, nor do I claim that it was always accurate. I rely mainly on what he reports he did leading up to and after the October Revolution and show that he had long experience in making such calculations that trace their origin to the historic program of Marx and Engels—what gave him the political authority to win skeptical Central Committee members to his position. My work is mainly an excavation, and all I pretend to do is to make the connections. Again, the burden of proof is on skeptics like Rabinowitch to show why Lenin was wrong to think that his electoral strategy was "indispensable" in the Bolshevik triumph. Scholars like him have never been reluctant to point out when they disagree with Lenin. And Rabinowitch, who has played a most valuable role in challenging orthodoxy, has the credentials to make a credible case.

Last, there is my claim about the "indispensability" of Lenin and the "subjective factor"—leadership and program. Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* (1979) continues to influence how political scientists and sociologists understand the Russian Revolution. For Skocpol, social revolutions are the product solely of social structures, economic crises, and geopolitical realities. Any contention, she argues, that a "purposive revolutionary movement" is also necessary is bogus. The "fact is that historically no successful social revolution has ever been 'made' by a mass-mobilizing, avowedly revolutionary movement."[32] While admitting that the Bolsheviks had out-organized their rivals to take power—without even once mentioning Lenin—she insists on her nonpurposive thesis for the Russian case. The reader of this book knows how utterly unsustainable is that claim. Skocpol correctly recognizes that "no modern social revolution has been as thorough-going as the Russian."[33] What she fails to grasp is how central to those transformations was the worker-peasant alliance that no one did more to forge than Lenin. And his electoral strategy, this book demonstrates, figured significantly in that success.

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Notes

Preface

1. August H. Nimtz, *Lenin's Electoral Strategy from Marx and Engels through the Revolution of 1905: The Ballot, the Streets—or Both* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). See the Preface there for an elaboration on the book's arguments, structure, style, rationale, and sources.

Chapter 1

1. Geoffrey A. Hosking, *The Russian Constitutional Experiment: Government and Duma, 1907–1914* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 44.
2. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 15 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), pp. 457–58. Hereafter, citations from his *Collected Works* will be designated as in this case: *15*, pp. 457–58.
3. *13*, p. 21.
4. Ibid., pp. 25–26.
5. Ibid., p. 35.
6. Ibid., pp. 42–43.
7. Ibid., pp. 44–48. Victoria E. Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion: Workers' Politics and Organizations in St. Petersburg and Moscow, 1900–1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 338–44, provides evidence that Lenin was essentially right about the "upswing" in Moscow—that it was indeed "partial" and that the Bolsheviks who thought it signaled a new upsurge were wrong.
8. *13*, p. 59.
9. For a few details, see Alfred Levin, *The Third Duma, Election and Profile* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1973), pp. 46–47.
10. Richard Pipes, ed., *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 36.
11. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 46 (New York: International Publishers, 1975–2004), pp. 197–98.
12. *13*, p. 81.
13. Ibid., pp. 85–86.
14. See August H. Nimtz, *Lenin's Electoral Strategy from Marx and Engels through the Revolution of 1905: The Ballot, the Streets—or Both* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 30–31. Hereafter, the first volume is referred to as *LES1905.*
15. *13*, pp. 90–91.
16. See *LES1905*, p. 11.

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17. Though critical of Bebel's actions, these were "the mistakes of a person with whom we are going the same way" (*34*, p. 371; see also *13*, pp. 164–65). Regarding "agitation among the youth," see Lenin's article on the experience of Social Democratic parties in doing such work: *41*, pp. 204–7.
18. *13*, pp. 91–93.
19. Nadezhda Krupskaya, *Memories of Lenin* (London: Panther Books, 1970), p. 145.
20. Hosking, p. 42.
21. Alfred Levin, *The Second Duma: A Study of the Social-Democratic Party and the Russian Constitutional Experiment* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 341.
22. *15*, p. 502n119.
23. Hosking, p. 43.
24. *13*, p. 518.
25. This, and the following, draws on Levin's account in *The Third Duma*, which provides some details on the RSDLP campaign, the difficulties they faced, and the election itself (pp. 85–111)—despite his tendentious spin on Lenin. It reveals that the Russian-language edition of the *Lenin Collected Works* is more informative than the English edition.
26. Levin, *The Third Duma*, p. 71.
27. Ibid., p. 98.
28. Ibid., pp. 100 and 104.
29. Ibid., p. 107. This is a telling admission from someone who didn't agree with Lenin's revolutionary working-class approach to the electoral process.
30. *13*, pp. 123–33.
31. Ibid., p. 518n75.
32. Ibid., pp. 146 and 519n77.
33. Ibid., p. 140. For background, see pp. 133–34.
34. Ibid., pp. 153–60.
35. For the larger context and useful details, see Hosking, ch. 8, "Towards the First World War."
36. *13*, pp. 479–84.
37. *15*, pp. 220–29.
38. Ibid., pp. 22–27.
39. Ibid., pp. 17–21.
40. Ibid., pp. 155–57.
41. *13*, pp. 52–53.
42. *15*, pp. 291–300.
43. Ibid., pp. 36–37.
44. Ibid., p. 353.
45. Ibid., pp. 325 and 328.
46. Ibid., pp. 352–53.
47. Krupskaya, p. 161.
48. *15*, pp. 422–23.

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49. Ibid., p. 413. There is a not-too-subtle difference in the tone of the two articles. While praising the fraction, the one in *Proletary* points to a few weaknesses, though constructively so. I suspect Lenin wrote it with an eye toward those Bolsheviks who were skeptical about Duma work.
50. Ibid., pp. 431–32 and 451. Regarding Leninological spin on what happened, see "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature: Chapter 1."
51. *41*, p. 228.
52. Ibid., p. 227. In a letter at the end of August, Lenin mentions his indispensable "work on the Promotion Commission for the Duma Social-Democratic group, which has its headquarters in Paris" (*15*, p. 476).
53. *16*, pp. 24–28.
54. Ibid., p. 64.
55. Ibid., p. 69.
56. Ibid., p. 151.
57. Was this "subcommittee" the "Promotion Commission" that Lenin earlier referred to (*15*, pp. 352–53)?
58. *16*, pp. 110–16.
59. See, for example, Lenin's 1917 "Postscript" to his *The Agrarian Program of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution, 1905–1907* (*13*, pp. 430–31).
60. See Hosking, ch. 4, for details.
61. *16*, pp. 176–78.
62. For details, see Hosking, pp. 106–16.
63. *16*, p. 81.
64. Ibid., pp. 173–75. In addition to his article, Lenin evidently gave a lecture, probably in Paris to the large exile Russian community, in which he included "*Support of the revolutionary* movement in *Persia*—protest against the *Finnish* campaign" (*41*, p. 231).
65. *16*, pp. 198–205.
66. Ibid., p. 33.
67. Ibid., p. 390. Kautsky, *Neue Zeit*'s editor, refused to print Lenin's response—not for the first time.
68. In a letter to Maxim Gorky about six months later, Lenin confirmed that the "Mensheviks predominate in the Duma group" (*34*, p. 446). He also revealed that working with the Menshevik deputies was one thing; working with the Menshevik leaders like Plekhanov was another. The only distinction Lenin thought worth making about the fraction concerned the attitude toward the liquidationists: "The liquidationist *Zhivoye Dyelo* counts among its permanent contributors *two* members of the group in the Duma—Astrakhantsev and Kuznetsov.* In the anti-liquidationist *Zvezda* there are eight members of the group—Voronin, Voiloshnikov, Yegorov, Zakharov, Pokrovsky, Predkaln, Poletayev, and Surkov. Two members of the Duma, Chkheidze and Gegechkori, contribute to neither of these organs. One (Shurkanov) contributes to both (*Until recently there was also Belousov. Now this extreme liquidator . . . has resigned from the group in the Duma. The latter has publicly warned all the voters of this; and has demanded his resignation from the Duma. A minor

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example showing to what lengths consistent liquidationism goes at times!)" (*17*, p. 545).
69. *16*, pp. 34–35.
70. Ibid., pp. 305–12.
71. Ibid., pp. 347–51.
72. *17*, pp. 173–78.
73. Ibid., pp. 253–56.
74. Ibid., p. 172.
75. Ibid., p. 256.
76. Ibid., pp. 338–41.
77. Ibid., p. 524.
78. Ibid., pp. 471–72. The only Leninologist who at least pays attention to Lenin's State Duma work has a different opinion. See "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature: Chapter 1."

CHAPTER 2

1. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 17 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), p. 278. Hereafter, citations from his *Collected Works* will be designated as in this case: *17*, p. 278.
2. Ibid., p. 397.
3. Ibid., pp. 278–83.
4. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 27 (New York: International Publishers, 1975–2004), pp. 226–27. Hereafter, citations from the *MECW* are designated as follows: *MECW* 27, pp. 226–27. See *LES1905*, p. 28.
5. Ibid., p. 219.
6. *17*, pp. 421–23.
7. Ibid., p. 436.
8. Ibid., p. 569.
9. Ibid., pp. 378–84.
10. Nadezhda Krupskaya, *Memories of Lenin* (London: Panther Books, 1970), p. 199.
11. On the inevitable debate about who was or was not invited, see Lenin's informative letter in *35*, pp. 25–26.
12. *17*, pp. 468–71.
13. Ibid., p. 473.
14. There was a two-line resolution about *Pravda* but not the later and more well-known one. It referred to the newspaper Trotsky published in Vienna; the Conference annulled an agreement the Central Committee had concluded with him in January 1910. Trotsky, it should be noted, called a "unity" meeting in Vienna in August for those grouped around *Pravda* as an alternative to the Prague Conference. The so-called August Bloc, as it became known, proved, however, to be a feckless challenge to what Lenin had organized. As Lenin accurately predicted, "Let someone try to set up a different R.S.D.L.P. *with* the liquidators! It would be laughable" (*35*, p. 26). On Trotsky's later admission

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that Lenin was right and his conciliationist position was wrong—"its profound erroneousness had been long ago demonstrated in both theory and practice"—see his *Stalin: An Appraisal of the Man and His Influence* (New York: Universal Library, 1941), p. 112.

15. *17*, p. 481. For the Leninological view of the conference on this and other points, see "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature: Chapter 2."
16. *35*, pp. 34–35.
17. *17*, p. 616.
18. *18*, pp. 17 and 102.
19. For useful details about the origins and course of *Pravda*, despite neither understanding nor agreeing with Lenin's politics, see Ralph Carter Elwood, "Lenin and *Pravda*, 1912–1914," *Slavic Review* 31, no. 2 (June 1972): 355–80.
20. *35*, p. 23.
21. Ibid., p. 26. See also Lenin's letter to Gorky, May 27, 1911 (*34*, p. 446), regarding the reality of *Zvezda*.
22. *18*, p. 207.
23. *43*, p. 769; Elwood, "Lenin and *Pravda*, 1912–1914," p. 358n11.
24. *18*, pp. 111–14.
25. Ibid., p. 120.
26. *35*, p. 40.
27. Ibid., p. 20.
28. In addition to *Pravda*, a new version of *Zvezda* appeared with a new name, *Nevskaya Zvezda* [*The Neva Star*], a weekly that lasted until October 1912.
29. *35*, pp. 40–41.
30. Ibid., p. 48.
31. Ibid., pp. 42–43.
32. Elwood, "Lenin and *Pravda*, 1912–1914," p. 364. For more details, see Trotsky, *Stalin*, pp. 138–42, who contends Stalin did so for opportunistic reasons.
33. *18*, pp. 136–42.
34. Ibid., p. 239.
35. Ibid., p. 199.
36. Ibid., pp. 196–97.
37. Ibid., pp. 237–38.
38. *17*, p. 482.
39. *18*, p. 310.
40. Ibid. p. 335.
41. Ibid., pp. 339–40.
42. Ibid., p. 352.
43. Ibid., p. 353.
44. Krupskaya, p. 208.
45. "For at least a couple of days on end Ilyich pumped us full of instructions"—cited in Trotsky, *Stalin*, p. 142.
46. For some useful details, see R. C. Elwood, *Inessa Armand: Revolutionary and Feminist* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 92–95. September 14 is inconsistent with other details Elwood supplies; see below, fn. 49. See also

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Robert B. McKean, *St. Petersburg between the Revolutions: Workers and Revolutionaries, June 1907–February 1917* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 92, who claims that Armand and Safarov were not successful in one of their tasks: reviving the St. Petersburg branch.

47. *35*, p. 58.
48. *18*, p. 348.
49. McKean, p. 138. For very useful data on the election of the factory delegates, see pp. 134–38. His interpretation of the entire process, less a victory for the Bolsheviks (pp. 131–40), differs from that of Badayev's account.
50. Lenin labeled one of the three Mensheviks, P. Sudakov, a "turncoat," charging that he had been duplicitous in the lead-up to the elections. He initially "'sided with *Pravda*,' [but on] the next day," after the elections, he flirted with the liquidationists; *41*, pp. 266–67.
51. Elwood, *Inessa Armand*, pp. 94–95, says that she was involved in these negotiations when arrested. While the details he supplies makes that a credible claim—making her role even more significant—it is inconsistent with the dates that Badayev gives, even taking into account the Old and New Calendar differences.
52. A. Badayev, *The Bolsheviks in the Tsarist Duma* (New York: International Publishers, 1932), pp. 3–24. Trotsky suggests that the second edition of Badayev's recollections bear the hand of Stalin, who wanted the book to put him in the best possible light given his conciliationist stances while working with the editorial board of *Pravda* (*Stalin*, pp. 143, 149)—thus the reason I say the "instructions to the delegates" were "apparently" drafted by Stalin. The original Russian edition was published about 1929; therefore the 1932 International Publishers edition is probably a translation of the second edition.
53. Although Badayev didn't elaborate on the campaign, Lenin provides some details and suggestions on how the Bolsheviks should respond to defend his election; see *18*, pp. 428–29.
54. *18*, p. 505.
55. *35*, pp. 61–62.
56. *41*, p. 269.
57. *18*, p. 460.
58. Ibid., pp. 493–518.
59. Ibid., p. 438.
60. *35*, p. 103.
61. Ibid., pp. 424–26. Lenin suggested that the Bolshevik deputies along with the St. Petersburg branch of the party issue a statement, which he drafted, to correct the "mistake" (ibid., p. 428).
62. Ibid., pp. 413–23.
63. Badayev, pp. 43–44.
64. Ibid., p. 52.
65. *18*, pp. 460–61. Another legal venue that Lenin insisted that the Bolsheviks participate in—that can only be noted here—were the elections for the boards of the "workers' sick benefit funds," a palliative the regime threw at the workers in a futile attempt to quell disquiet; see the resolution, "The Insurance

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Campaign" (pp. 461–62). According to Krupskaya, Lenin "attached great importance to the election and believed that the election campaign would strengthen our contacts with the masses" (p. 226).

66. The three provisions were later lost. Related here is what the editors of the *Lenin Collected Works* provide—*18*, p. 636n178, which is consistent with other documentation. Badayev remembers, "after a lapse of fifteen years" (p. 63), somewhat differently. But the two accounts are not, as I suggest next, necessarily incompatible.
67. Badayev, pp. 58–64.
68. *35*, p. 70.
69. Ibid., p. 84.
70. On Badayev's activities, much of which consisted of defending workers in St. Petersburg from the assaults of both bosses and the state, see Badayev, pp. 71–99. For instructive details on how the two deputies from the Ukraine carried out this work in their constituencies, see R. C. Elwood, *Russian Social Democracy in the Underground: A Study of the RSDLP in the Ukraine, 1907–1914* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), pp. 188–89.
71. *35*, p. 65. This challenges Badayev's claim, "From the moment that the fraction was formed it made newspaper work one of its chief tasks" (pp. 179–80).
72. It's interesting to note that the resolution was first published in 1956, three years after Stalin's death.
73. *41*, pp. 272–73.
74. Badayev, p. 64.
75. *35*, pp. 78–79.
76. Ibid., pp. 82 and 86.
77. Ibid., p. 93.
78. *19*, p. 64.
79. *35*, pp. 93–96.
80. Ibid., pp. 88–89, 99–100.
81. Krupskaya, pp. 200 and 225; Lenin's later article about Chernomazov, *23*, pp. 362–64; Elwood, "Lenin and *Pravda*," p. 374, and *Russian Social Democracy in the Underground*, pp. 182–83.
82. *35*, p. 111.
83. Elwood, "Lenin and *Pravda*," p. 376.
84. For details, see the resolution that Lenin and the Bolshevik deputies composed: *19*, p. 425. Regarding McKean's claim that Lenin's charges were "mostly demonstrably false" (p. 141), see "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature: Chapter 2."
85. *18*, pp. 530–31.
86. *35*, p. 95.
87. *19*, pp. 44–46.
88. *41*, p. 275.
89. *19*, p. 492.
90. Ibid., p. 424.
91. Ibid., pp. 425–26.

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92. Ibid., pp. 458–74.
93. Ibid., p. 472. As for McKean's claim that these facts were "the flimsiest of pretexts [for the split] . . . which were mostly demonstrably false" (p. 141), see "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature: Chapter 2."
94. *20*, pp. 538–39.
95. For informative details on how the fraction and *Pravda* assisted the Baku oil workers' strike in 1914, for example, see Badayev, pp. 168–69.
96. Badayev, p. 126.
97. Ibid., p. 132.
98. *18*, p. 365.
99. *19*, p. 56.
100. Ibid., p. 274.
101. *41*, p. 276.
102. *19*, p. 547; *20*, p. 64.
103. *20*, pp. 254–58.
104. Lenin's opinion was warranted. It was later learned that Bernstein—and evidently with some complicity by Bebel—carried out the "greatest bowdlerization" in the history of the Marxist movement; Roger Morgan, *The German Social Democrats and the First International, 1864–1872* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 248.
105. *19*, pp. 553–54.
106. Ibid., pp. 298–99. See Chapter 1.
107. *36*, p. 243.
108. Ibid., p. 235.
109. *43*, pp. 406–7.
110. Badayev, p. 174.
111. Ibid., p. 135.
112. Ibid., pp. 149–50.
113. *31*, p. 45.
114. Badayev, p. 163. Much has been made of Lenin having been duped by Malinovsky. See "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature: Chapter 2," for a discussion.
115. Richard Pipes, ed., *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 39.
116. Badayev, p. 177.

CHAPTER 3

1. New scholarship reveals that Nicholas was the real instigator and that the "Guns of August" actually began in July. See Sean McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011). McMeekin's research sustains Lenin's long-held charge about the Czar's imperial ambitions.
2. Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: A History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1996), p. 293.

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3. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 21 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), p. 29. Hereafter, citations from his *Collected Works* will be designated as in this case: *21*, p. 29.
4. *35*, pp. 177–78.
5. A. Badayev, *The Bolsheviks in the Tsarist Duma* (New York: International Publishers, 1932), p. 198.
6. For an informative historiography of the declaration, see D. A. Longley, "The Russian Social Democratic Statement to the Duma on 26 July (8 August) 1914: A New Look at the Evidence," *English Historical Review* 102, no. 187 (July 1987): 599–621. Longley (pp. 607–8) questions Badayev's claim about the censorship of the declaration.
7. The St. Petersburg branch of the party did issue a statement that made no concessions to the patriotic fervor. See "Petersburg Bolshevik Appeal against the War," in *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International: Documents: 1907–1916, The Preparatory Years*, ed. John Riddell (New York: Pathfinder, 1986), pp. 131–32.
8. Badayev, pp. 200–202 (including note).
9. Ibid., pp. 206–7. See Robert B. McKean, *St. Petersburg between the Revolutions: Workers and Revolutionaries, June 1907–February 1917* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 362–64, for details on the differences among the Mensheviks.
10. Longley, p. 617.
11. *35*, p. 165.
12. Ibid. See Badayev, pp. 207–8, for the response. McKean says that Lenin "in as yet unpublished correspondence, criticized the Bolsheviks' reply to Vandervelde" (p. 366). That wouldn't be inconsistent with Lenin's comment in his letter of October 17 if McKean is referring to a draft response. Unfortunately, McKean doesn't let his readers know what he has apparently seen that might suggest otherwise. See "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature: Chapter 3," for a discussion of McKean.
13. *21*, pp. 16–17.
14. Ibid., p. 18.
15. According to Trotsky, "Not one of the Russian organizations or groups of the party took the openly defeatist position which Lenin came out for abroad" (*The History of the Russian Revolution* [New York: Pathfinder Press, 2009], p. 59).
16. *21*, pp. 30–31.
17. Badayev, p. 212. Regarding McKean's suggestion that the "amendments" repudiated Lenin's revolutionary defeatist stance (p. 360), see "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature: Chapter 3." Figes's claim that "Lenin had imposed his views" on the fraction and the party (p. 294) is addressed there as well.
18. *35*, p. 175.
19. Badayev, p. 220.
20. Ibid., pp. 223–32.
21. *21*, p. 322.
22. Ibid., p. 256.

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23. Ibid., p. 323.
24. Ibid., p. 176.
25. Ibid., p. 258.
26. Ibid., pp. 401–2.
27. Ibid., p. 482n164. For more details on the elections and a different interpretation, see McKean, pp. 380–84. Another but considerably less significant legal arena were the workers' insurance boards. Though Lenin made no mention of them, a few supplemental elections to them took place at the beginning of 1916 and the Bolsheviks scored some successes; see McKean, pp. 401–3, for details.
28. *21*, pp. 401–2.
29. *35*, p. 235.
30. For details, see Farrell Dobbs, *Teamster Bureaucracy* (New York: Pathfinder, 2002).
31. *21*, pp. 251–56.
32. *22*, pp. 169–78.
33. Lenin lived in Switzerland for seven years (though not consecutively) beginning in 1895. It was during his last stay, August 1914 to April 1917, that he participated in Swiss working-class politics as a member of the Swiss Social Democratic Party.
34. *23*, pp. 141–42.
35. Ibid., p. 253.
36. Ibid., pp. 289–90.
37. Ibid., pp. 292–93.
38. Ibid., pp. 324–31 and 352.
39. *24*, p. 86.
40. Ibid., pp. 22–25.
41. See "Paris Commune (1871)," MIA: Encyclopedia of Marxism: Glossary of Organisations, http://marxistsfr.org/glossary/orgs/p/a.htm#paris-commune.
42. *24*, pp. 38–39.
43. Ibid., p. 69.
44. Ibid., pp. 44–53.
45. Ibid., pp. 210–11.
46. Ibid., p. 181.
47. This is Trotsky in his own words from his rare book *Lenin* (1925) in the Trotsky Archives (http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1925/lenin) and at variance with the account in Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky 1879–1921* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), pp. 255–56.
48. *24*, p. 543.
49. Deutscher, pp. 84–97; Trotsky, "Report of the Siberian Delegation," Trotsky Archives, http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1903.
50. *35*, p. 285.
51. See Krupskaya's point about Lenin's ability to "approach the opponent of yesterday as a comrade" (Nadezhda Krupskaya, *Memories of Lenin* [London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970], p. 217). The record of the 14-year estrangement reveals that Lenin made more overtures for reconciliation than Trotsky.

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52. *24*, pp. 241–42.
53. Ibid., pp. 295–96.
54. Ibid., pp. 311–12.
55. Ibid., p. 334.
56. Ibid., pp. 373–74.
57. *25*, pp. 18–26.
58. Figes, pp. 397–98.
59. *25*, p. 155.
60. For the best eyewitness/participant account, see Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, pp. 501–82.
61. *25*, pp. 179–80.
62. See *LES1905*, ch. 3.
63. *25*, pp. 310–12.
64. Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 795.
65. There are, it seems, two party resolutions possibly composed by Lenin—which I haven't seen—and apparently never translated into English that would no doubt be of significance. At the Sixth Congress of the RSDLP (Bolshevik) at the end of July, there were two agenda items, "Elections to the Constituent Assembly" and "Elections," and, probably, resolutions that codified the decisions taken. Regarding the meeting, see *25*, pp. 526–30. As for the official record of the congress, see Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power: The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), p. 329n1.
66. *24*, pp. 97–101.
67. Ibid., pp. 471–73.
68. Ibid., p. 512.
69. Ibid., p. 511.
70. William G. Rosenberg, "The Russian Municipal Duma Elections of 1917: A Preliminary Computation of Returns," *Soviet Studies* 21, no. 2 (October 1969), pp. 131–63.
71. Ibid., p. 162.
72. Quoted in Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power*, p. 92.
73. Krupskaya, pp. 303–6.
74. *24*, pp. 211–12.
75. Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, pp. 523–24.
76. *25*, p. 308.
77. Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 795.
78. *24*, p. 245.
79. *25*, pp. 427–29.
80. Krupskaya, p. 163.
81. *25*, p. 497.
82. *25*, p. 374. On August 25 the Czarist commander of the army, General Kornilov, launched, with a wink and nod from Kerensky, a counterrevolutionary putsch that was soon put down owing to mass mobilizations led by the Bolsheviks—a decisive turning point in the Russian Revolution.

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83. *26*, p. 19.
84. *27*, p. 25.
85. *26*, p. 25. It is no accident that Lenin reemploys "parliamentary cretinism" at this moment. He had been reading, as his letter to the Central Committee "Marxism and Insurrection" shows, Marx and Engels on the German Revolution of 1848. That was the context in which they coined the term. See *LES1905*, ch. 1.
86. Ibid., p. 33.
87. Ibid., pp. 54–55.
88. *41*, pp. 446–48.
89. Ibid., pp. 597–98n554; *25*, p. 530n97.
90. *12*, pp. 109–12.
91. For useful details on the election campaign, see Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks in Power: The First Year of Soviet Rule in Petrograd* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 62–69.
92. Ibid., p. 416n50, on data on peasant meetings that demonstrated more support for soviet governance than the Constituent Assembly.
93. *26*, pp. 437–39. Regarding Robert Service's allegations about Lenin's supposed attitude toward the Constituent Assembly, see "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature: Chapter 3."
94. *29*, p. 311.
95. *29*, pp. 485–86. Exit polls for the 2012 US presidential election indicated that 59 percent of voters said the economic system favors the rich.
96. *28*, p. 272.
97. Ibid., p. 256. It is to be noted that the Czar and his family were denied the right to vote by the new government that came to rule in March 1917.
98. *29*, p. 125. In the United States, four states permanently disenfranchise ex-felons. In Florida it is estimated that nearly a quarter of its voting-age black population is not eligible to vote because of a felony record.
99. Ibid., p. 184.
100. Ibid., p. 125.
101. Ibid., pp. 371–72.
102. Ibid., pp. 107–8.
103. About the data, "[H]is point of view was by no means as biased as one might expect, for he consciously sought in the figures the lessons they contained for his party, whether flattering or otherwise, and his deductions constitute a thoroughgoing and penetrating analysis of the results." Oliver Radkey, *Russia Goes to the Polls: The Elections to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly, 1917* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 6.
104. *30*, pp. 265–66.
105. *21*, p. 253.
106. *27*, p. 146.
107. Regarding the debate at the Second Congress on this issue, see John Riddell, ed., *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite! Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress, 1920* (New York: Pathfinder, 1991), pp. 420–82.

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108. *31*, p. 21.
109. Ibid., p. 27.
110. Ibid., p. 36.
111. Ibid., p. 61.
112. Ibid., p. 64.
113. Ibid., p. 98.
114. Riddell, *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!*, p. 459.
115. *31*, p. 65.
116. Riddell, *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!*, p. 769.
117. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), pp. xiii–xiv. I thank Howard Kling for bringing this to my attention.
118. *32*, p. 48. For details, see George Fyson, ed., *Lenin's Final Fight: Speeches and Writings, 1922–23* (New York: Pathfinder, 1995).
119. Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks in Power*, ch. 2, also subscribes—looking at other factors—to a contingential argument.
120. Robert Daniels, ed., *A Documentary History of Communism*, vol. 2 (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), p. 116.
121. Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 1193.
122. Just as in the 1930s, the current global capitalist crisis has shaken the confidence of defenders of liberal democracy. Symptomatic is the May 2013 report of the Transatlantic Academy, "The Democratic Disconnect," as well as the cover story for that month of the British monthly *Prospect*, "Has Democracy Had Its Day? Electoral Politics Has Had a Bad Decade."

CONCLUSION

1. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 10 (New York: International Publishers, 1975–2004), p. 284. Hereafter, citations from the *MECW* are designated as follows: *MECW* 10, p. 284.
2. David Riazanov, *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: An Introduction to Their Lives and Works* (New York: Monthly Review, 1973), p. 100.
3. Robert Service, *Lenin: A Political Life*, vol. 2 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 353n32. On the retrieval of the materials in 1920, see Helen Rappaport, *Conspirator: Lenin in Exile* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), p. 253.
4. Israel Getzler, *Martov: A Political Biography of a Russian Social Democrat* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967), ch. 6, pp. 113–37, provides inter alia a few details on Martov's Duma work.
5. *MECW* 6, p. 519.
6. Hal Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto* (Berkeley: Center for Socialist History, 1994), p. 321, argues convincingly that Engels substituted "whenever" for "as soon as" in the aforementioned sentence for the 1888 translation of the Manifesto that he supervised. He did so to acknowledge that the expectation in the original 1848 document about the bourgeoisie was not fulfilled.

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7. *MECW* 10, p. 284.
8. *MECW* 27, p. 271.
9. Leon Trotsky, *The Young Lenin* (New York: Doubleday, 1972), p. 187.
10. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 21 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), p. 16. Hereafter, citations from his *Collected Works* will be designated as in this case: *21*, p. 16.
11. My article, "A Return to Lenin—But without Marx and Engels?" *Science & Society* 73, no. 4 (October 2009): 452–73, details how Lenin began to have second thoughts about the German party before August 1914.
12. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 13 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), p. 81. Hereafter, citations from his *Collected Works* will be designated as in this case: *13* p. 81.
13. I elaborate on this point in "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature: Conclusion."
14. Leon Trotsky, "The Class, the Party, and the Leadership," Marxists.org (1940), http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1940/xx/party.htm.
15. For the best-known example of the claim that the subjective factor was inconsequential in the Russian Revolution, Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979), see "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature: Conclusion."
16. I'll always remember the student in my Cuban Revolution class at the University of Minnesota in 2008 who, after reading the Second Declaration and being persuaded by it, seemed skeptical about the presentation of the vice-presidential candidate for the Socialist Workers Party that year whom I invited to speak to the class. The essence of his question was, Didn't her candidacy legitimize the capitalist electoral process? Alyson Kennedy, the candidate, drew on the legacy that her party inherited in response. That moment was motivation in part for writing this book.
17. Joe Hansen's "The Seven Errors Made by Che Guevara," in *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution: The Trotskyist View* (New York: Pathfinder, 1978), is most instructive on the consequences of this turn.
18. The focus here is on books that claim to be overviews of Lenin's life. Therefore, works such as Paul LeBlanc's *Lenin and the Revolutionary Party* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1990) or Lars Lih's *Lenin Rediscovered:* What Is to Be Done? *in Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), which respectively look at Lenin's organizational ideas and his famous book, are not discussed here.
19. Neil Harding, *Lenin's Political Thought: Theory and Practice in the Democratic and Socialist Revolutions* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2009), p. 25. While it's possible to treat his book as sympathetic to Lenin, his *Leninism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996) is a different story. There he repeats the standard anti-Lenin formulas—for example, the "elitist and anti-democratic disposition of Leninism" (p. 174). These failings, he asserts, can be traced to Marx and Engels; the central claim of the book is that "Leninism was authentic Marxism"

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(p. 6). As for what he thinks of "authentic Marxism," his tendentious and dishonest review of my Marx-Engels book (*Democratization* 8, no. 2 [Summer 2001]) leaves no doubt.

20. Alan Woods, *Bolshevism: The Road to Power: A History of the Bolshevik Party from the Early Beginnings to the October Revolution* (London: Wellred Publications, 1999). That he hardly acknowledges Lenin's *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, in what poses as a thorough reading of Bolshevism, is telling—an egregious attempt to turn Lenin into a supporter of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.
21. Christopher Read, *Lenin: A Revolutionary Life* (London: Routledge, 2005).
22. Lars T. Lih, *Lenin* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011).
23. At the panel that the two of us participated in at the Historical Materialism Conference in London, November 2012 (which is somewhere in cyberspace), I asked Lih if he had an explanation for the silence. He didn't reply. I posed the same question shortly afterward in an email, and he wrote that he would get back to me with an answer. I've yet, as of August 2013, to receive his response.
24. I am thankful to my colleagues at the University of Minnesota, of different generations, who responded to my informal inquiry about which texts introduced them to Lenin.
25. Bertram D. Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution: A Biographical History* (New York: Stein and Day, 1984).
26. See "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature: Chapter 2" regarding a most egregious fabrication performed by Wolfe on one of Lenin's texts.
27. Alfred G. Meyer, *Leninism* (New York: Fredrick A. Praeger, 1957).
28. "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature: Chapter 2" also critiques some of Meyer's misrepresentations.
29. Louis Fischer, *The Life of Lenin* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 523.
30. Robert Service, *Lenin: A Political Life*, vols. 1–3 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985–1995).
31. See "A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature: Chapter 2" for details. In Service's *Lenin: A Biography* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), the pickings are even slimmer. It's worth noting that Service's *Trotsky: A Biography* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2009) has rightly reaped scathing criticism for its shoddy scholarship driven by a political agenda.
32. Richard Pipes, ed., *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996). For the most informed critical review, see Lars T. Lih's review of Pipes's collection, which he compares with the more complete, 420-document, and more accurately translated and less tendentious Russian edition, in *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 35, nos. 2–3 (Summer/Fall 2001): 301–6.
33. Leo Panitch, Greg Albo, and Vivek Chibber, eds., *Socialist Register 2013: The Question of Strategy* (Pontypool, Wales: Merlin, 2013).
34. Ibid., p. xi.
35. Charles Post, "What Is Left of Leninism? New European Left Parties in Historical Perspective," in *Socialist Register*, pp. 175–97.

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36. *33*, pp. 430–31.
37. Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed: What Is the Soviet Union and Where Is It Going?* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), p. 186.
38. Ibid.
39. Post, p. 179.
40. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). I predicted as much in my "Class Struggle under 'Empire': In Defence of Marx and Engels," *International Socialism* no. 96 (Autumn 2002): 47–70.
41. In September 1973, the Social Democratic government of Salvador Allende in Chile was overthrown in a coup d'état headed by General Augusto Pinochet and supported by the US government. Though the working-class masses asked to be armed to defend his government and the conquests they had made, Allende declined, saying the military in Chile, unlike elsewhere in Latin America, had always respected civilian rule.
42. See my "Class Struggle under 'Empire': In Defence of Marx and Engels."
43. Atilio Borom, "Strategy and Tactics in Popular Struggles in Latin America," in *Socialist Register*, p. 249.
44. Ibid., p. 253.
45. Michalis Spourdalakis, "Left Strategy in the Greek Cauldron: Explaining Syriza's Success," in *Socialist Register*, pp. 108; Aristides Baltas, "The Rise of Syriza: An Interview," in *Socialist Register*, pp. 131–32.
46. Hillary Wainwright, "Transformative Power: Political Organization in Transition," in *Socialist Register*, pp. 138 and 143.
47. Forever etched on my brain when I first read them more than thirty years ago are the all-so-instructive lines in Leon Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 2009) about the decisive moments in the drama of 1917: "The Bolsheviks did not summon the masses for the April demonstration. The Bolsheviks will not call the armed masses into the streets at the beginning of July. Only in October will the party finally fall in step and march out at the head of the masses, not for a demonstration, but for a revolution" (p. 369).
48. Baltas, p. 124.
49. At the end of 2012, Syriza held a national conference to begin the process of transforming itself into a political party, and the differences between those who want to moderate its message in order to become the governing party and those who want to stay with the radical vision quickly manifested itself. Engels's comment made in 1887 about a workers' party "getting bourgeois" is apropos: "It is a misfortune that overtakes all extreme parties as soon as the day for them to become 'possible' draws near." Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 48 (New York: International Publishers, 1975–2004), p. 115. Hereafter, citations from the *MECW* are designated as follows: *MECW* 48, p. 115. In his speech to the party convention in July 2013, Alexis Tsipras made a number of proposals about the electoral process and party

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discipline but didn't make clear if Syriza's parliamentary group would be subordinate to the will of its rank and file.

50. Post, p. 191.
51. Susan Spronk, "Twenty-First Century Socialism in Bolivia: The Gender Agenda," in *Socialist Register*, p. 259.
52. In the draft I mistakenly wrote "1912"; I probably had in mind the Lena goldfields strike in Siberia, when miners there—like the gold and platinum miners in South Africa—went out on strike and helped revive the revolutionary process in Russia leading eventually to 1917.
53. Mandela, evidently, according to new revelations prompted by his death on December 5, 2013, had in fact been a member of the SACP. See Bill Keller, "Nelson Mandela, Communist," *New York Times*, December 8, 2013, p. 8.
54. Longtime SACP leader Joe Slovo's 1989 document "Has Socialism Failed?," written as the USSR and its sycophant regimes in Eastern Europe were about to implode, appeared to be the analysis that many thought provided an explanation for what went wrong with the Stalinist option. In hindsight, admittedly, it could never have been an honest discussion, because there were too many skeletons in the SACP's closet and too many people were still alive who were responsible for them being there. Former SACP leader Raymond Suttner's recent denunciation of the ANC/SACP/COSATU alliance for its venality, "South Africa: The Tripartite Alliance Has Sold Its Soul," *Mail & Guardian*, September 27, 2013, is telling. Like Slovo's document, it fails to get to the root of the problem—the counterrevolutionary character of Stalinism.
55. The latest news from South Africa suggests this may now be underway. The largest trade union—Numsa, the miners—announced that it would break with the Triple Alliance and "would seek to start a socialist party aimed at protecting the interests of the working class." See Lydia Polgreen, "South Africa's Biggest Trade Union Pulls Its Support for A.N.C.," *New York Times*, December 20, 2013.
56. *MECW* 50, p. 236.
57. August H. Nimtz, *Marx, Tocqueville, and Race in America: The "Absolute Democracy" or "Defiled Republic"* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), p. 213. I didn't employ a crystal ball for my prediction about the crisis but the analysis that the US Socialist Workers' Party began making with the 1987 Wall Street stock-market crash.
58. Thomas Sugrue's op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (December 14, 2012) about the Michigan defeat is accurate about the failed course of the once-powerful United Auto Workers union: "[T]hey have used their dwindling resources to influence elections . . . rather than confronting employers directly. At a moment when the voting machine has replaced the picket line as the last bastion of union strength, right-to-work advocates hope to weaken what remains of the movement's clout. Without a strong voice representing them, Michigan workers will remain outmatched in what was already a tough defensive battle for economic security."

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59. Joan Sangster and Meg Luxton, "Feminism, Co-optation and the Problems of Amnesia: A Response to Nancy Fraser," in *Socialist Register*, p. 303.
60. Barbara Epstein, "Occupy Oakland: The Question of Violence," in *Socialist Register*, pp. 72–74.
61. *33*, p. 431.
62. "If from the outset the democrats come out resolutely and terroristically against the reactionaries, the influence of the latter in the elections will be destroyed in advance." *MECW* 10, p. 284.
63. Alex Callinicos, "Alain Badiou and the Idea of Communism," in *Socialist Register*, p. 341.
64. "Inevitable" (or, in its original German, *unvermeidlich*) appears only once in the *Manifesto*, at the very end of Part One, immediately followed by Part Two, "Proletarians and Communists," about the latter's tasks.

Appendix A

1. Original text available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1908/5thconfr/3.htm.

Appendix B

1. Original text available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1909/confreeb/part3.htm.
2. [Footnote from source] *Vlasov*—A. I. Rykov.
3. [Footnote from source] *The private meeting*—a meeting of Leninist Bolsheviks called by Lenin on the eve of the conference of the extended editorial board of *Proletary*. Lenin gave the meeting full information concerning the state of affairs in the Bolshevik section and the struggle against the otzovists, the ultimatumists and the god-builders. The theses contained in Lenin's report formed the basis for the resolutions adopted by the conference of the extended editorial board.

Appendix C

1. Original text available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1909/oct/00b.htm.
2. [Footnote from source] The first part of the first chapter of the explanatory note should include a popular account, written in as propagandist a manner as possible, of the reasons in favour of the eight-hour working day, from the point of view of the productivity of labour, the health and cultural interests of the proletariat, and the interests in general of its struggle for emancipation.—*Lenin*
3. [Footnote from source] *Zubatov, S. V.*—colonel of gendarmerie and chief of the Moscow Secret Police, who carried out a policy known as "police socialism." In 1901–03, on his initiative legal workers' organisations were set up in order to divert the workers from the political struggle against the autocracy.

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Zubatov's activity in setting up legal workers' organisations was supported by V. K. Plehve, Minister of the Interior. Zubatov tried to direct the working-class movement towards the achievement of purely economic demands and, to make the workers think that the government was ready to meet their demands. The first Zubatov organisation was set up in Moscow in May 1901 under the name "Society for the Mutual Assistance of Workers in Mechanical Industry." Zubatov organisations were set up also in Minsk, Odessa, Vilna, Kiev and other cities.

4. [Footnote from source] Jules Guesde, *Le Problème et la solution; les huit heures à la chambre*, Lille. (*The Problem and Its Solution; the Eight-Hour Day in Parliament—Ed.*)
5. [Footnote from source] M. Schippel, *Sozial-Demokratisches Reichstagshandbuch* (*Social Democratic Handbook to the Reichstag—Ed.*) Berlin, 1902, pp. 882 and 886.
6. [Footnote from source] Parvus, *Die Handelskrisis und die Gewerkschaften*. Nebst Anhang, Gesetzentwurf über den achtstundigen Normalarbeitstag. München: 1901 (Parvus, *The Trade Crisis and the Trade Unions*. With appendix: Bill on the Eight-Hour Normal Working Day Munich, 1901.—*Ed.*)
7. [Footnote from source] On the question of the *gradual* introduction of the eight-hour working day Parvus says, in our opinion quite rightly, that this feature of his Bill arises "not from the desire to come to an understanding with the employers but from the desire to come to an understanding with the workers. We should follow the tactics of the trade unions: they carry out the reduction of the working day extremely gradually for they are well aware that this is the easiest way to counteract a *reduction of wages*" (Parvus's italics, ibid., pp. 62–63).—*Lenin*

APPENDIX D

1. Original text available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1912/6thconf/efd.htm.

APPENDIX E

1. [Footnote from source] Lenin wrote "*The Election Platform of the R.S.D.L.P.*" in Paris, early in March 1912, shortly after the Prague Conference. "The Election Platform" was published in Russia by the Central Committee of the Party as a separate leaflet and distributed in 18 localities including the main working-class centres. Reprinted from the leaflet, it appeared as a supplement to No. 26 of *Sotsial-Demokrat*. It was also reprinted by many local Bolshevik organisations and by the Russian Bureau of the C.C. of the R.S.D.L.P. in Tiflis. The significance of this document is dealt with by V. I. Lenin in his article "The Platform of the Reformists and the Platform of the Revolutionary Social-Democrats." Original text available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1912/mar/00c.htm.
2. [Footnote from source] *Khodynka Tsar*—at Khodynka Field on the outskirts of Moscow, a carnival was arranged on the occasion of the coronation of Tsar

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Nicholas II on May 18, 1896. Criminal negligence on the part of the authorities led to a tremendous crush in which about 2,000 people lost their lives and tens of thousands were injured.

3. [Footnote from source] *The law of March 4, 1906*—temporary regulations providing for a certain freedom of associations, unions and meetings, but which at the same time laid down a number of obstacles, and in fact reduced the law to a scrap of paper. It gave the Minister of the Interior the right not only to suppress associations and unions, but also to refuse official recognition to new unions.

Appendix F

1. Original text available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/mar/28.htm.

Appendix G

1. Original text available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/petcconf/22b.htm.

Appendix H

1. Original text available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1919/dec/16.htm.

Appendix I

1. Original text available at http://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/2nd-congress/ch08a.htm.

A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature

1. For a useful introduction to this literature, see "Review Forum: Documentary History and Political Parties," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 107–232.
2. Robert Service, *Lenin: A Political Life*, vol. 1 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 186.
3. Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: A History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1996), pp. 388–89.
4. Nadezhda Krupskaya, *Memories of Lenin* (London: Panther Books, 1970), p. 172.
5. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 31 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), p. 35. Hereafter, citations from his *Collected Works* will be designated as in this case: *31*, p. 35.
6. Robert B. McKean, *St. Petersburg between the Revolutions: Workers and Revolutionaries, June 1907–February 1917* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 131.

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7. Service, vol. 2, p. 18.
8. *18*, p. 494.
9. Geoffrey A. Hosking, *The Russian Constitutional Experiment: Government and Duma, 1907–1914* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 183.
10. Service, vol. 2, p. 18.
11. Ibid., p. 19.
12. Ibid., p. 24.
13. McKean, p. 84.
14. Leon Trotsky, *Stalin: An Appraisal of the Man and His Influence* (New York: Universal Library, 1941), p. 112.
15. McKean, p. 141.
16. Ibid., p. 525n37.
17. Service, vol. 2, p. 50.
18. Louis Fischer, *The Life of Lenin* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 83. But Fischer couldn't resist at least one fabrication. He claims that Lenin, despite Malinovsky's plea that he do so, did not attend his trial (p. 84). In fact, he did, according to R. C. Elwood, *Russian Social Democracy in the Underground: A Study of the RSDLP in the Ukraine, 1907–1914* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), p. 66.
19. Richard Pipes, ed., *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 37–38. According to Pipes, "Lenin pretended in 1917 that he had had no contact with Malinovsky after he resigned from the Duma" (p. 24). That claim is contradicted by Lenin's point that the investigating commission, of which he was a member, "arranged personal confrontations with Malinovsky" (p. 37).
20. Trotsky, *Stalin*, p. 151.
21. Hal Draper, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*, vol. 2 (New York: Monthly Review, 1977–90), p. 653.
22. Pipes, pp. 31–32.
23. *21*, p. 172.
24. Figes, p. 294.
25. McKean, p. 361.
26. *21*, p. 280.
27. Service, vol. 2, p. 304.
28. *6*, p. 31.
29. Figes, p. 507.
30. Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power: The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), p. 208.
31. Ibid., inter alia, pp. 194–204.
32. Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 17.
33. Ibid., p. 206.

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